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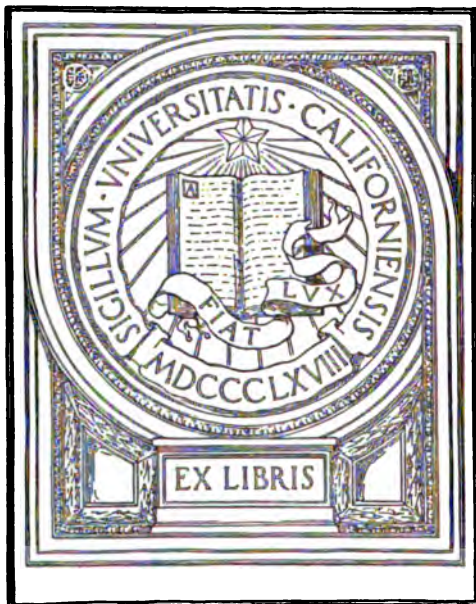
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## **FUNAFUTI**









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2015-10-10

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# FUNAFUTI

## OR THREE MONTHS ON A CORAL ISLAND: AN UNSCIENTIFIC ACCOUNT OF A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

By MRS. EDGEWORTH DAVID  
“

WITH PORTRAITS, MAP, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

UNIV. OF  
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THE LEADER  
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## PREFACE

THIS does not claim to be a literary production, but merely an accurate, though unscientific, account of the 1897 Funafuti coral-boring expedition.

I write because Funafuti proved so intensely interesting to me, and because I hope others may like to know the island without enduring the hardships of going there.

I also have a faint hope that this book will enlist sympathy for the Funafutians, and perhaps be indirectly the cause of securing a medical missionary for the island.

I am greatly indebted to the severe, but kindly, criticisms of Professor Scott, of the Sydney University, without whose help and encouragement I should never have attempted to publish.

The leader of the expedition says that as my MS. has thrice made him fall asleep, the book will probably prove an infallible cure for insomnia, and is worth publishing as such.

I owe very hearty thanks to Dr. Bullen-Beattie, of H.M.S. *Royalist*, to Messrs. Pool and Woolnough, and to the leader of the expedition, for the photographs from which the illustrations were prepared; also to the Rev. S. Ella, of Sydney, and Mr. J. O'Brien, of Funafuti, for the translations of native songs and stories.

### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

MRS. DAVID, the wife of Professor T. W. E. David, of Sydney University, resides in Australia, and it has consequently been impossible for her to revise the proofs of her book as it was passing through the press. This task has been very kindly undertaken on her behalf by Mrs. G. R. Scott, of Merton College, Oxford, to whom, as well as to Professor Bonney, D.Sc., F.R.S., who has also read the proofs, and has added a postscript on the continued work of the expedition, I beg to tender my sincere thanks for the care and pains which they have bestowed on the book.

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sure this was true, because a very clever Oxford professor of 'ologies had been there, and he told us so. Still I wanted to see it on a map, to measure the distance from Sydney, and calculate how long it would take to get there, for we were wretched sailors. We pored over many atlases, but could not find the name Funafuti. After much search we found in one large map of the Pacific a few dots labelled "Ellice Group." This map put the dots somewhere about eight degrees south of the Equator, and about seven hundred miles north of the Fiji Group, and we calculated that a steamer, going ten knots an hour, ought to take us from Sydney to Funafuti in twelve days at the longest. We took just twelve days to get there, with a delightful break of five days in hospitable Suva; but we took five weeks and three days to get back again! We noticed that no two atlases agreed as to the exact position of the Ellice Group, but then, for such a group as that, anywhere within two hundred miles is near enough.

The map labelled the islands British by putting a pink line under the name. Under our own flag, anyhow! And if the black people kill and eat us, we shall be avenged! Unutterable comfort in that thought!

We found afterwards that the Ellice Islanders hadn't the faintest desire to kill and eat us; on the contrary, they were quite as civilized as most white folks, and merely wanted to earn our dollars easily and eat our "kaikai" freely.

My husband was a great authority on geography, because he had lectured on the subject for years, and

he told us a lot about currents and trade-winds, and how they would be in our favour or against us, according to the direction in which our ship was steering. It was curious that those currents and trade-winds should not have been more amenable to geographical laws than they were this year; it was distinctly ungrateful to all the learned professors who had taken such pains to formulate complicated and satisfying theories about their movements. The winds and waters would not blow or run in the theoretical course for us at all; the currents were always dead against us, and the winds were headwinds, all the way there and all the way back. No, this is not exaggeration, merely undecorated fact!

As to the climate of Funafuti, a man who had been there said it wasn't half bad, at any rate no worse than the Sydney climate in February. He also said that there was seldom wind enough there to blow papers about in his hut, and that it rained only about once a week. But even the climate refused to maintain its written character for us. It blew hard by fits and starts nearly every day, and rained for a short time almost every day, and greeted us with twelve days and nights of almost unceasing downpour when we first arrived.

After collecting a great deal of such accurate and useful information about distance, winds, currents, and climate, we ordered our provisions, and again sought the advice of theoretical experts as to quantities required for ourselves, the scientific volunteers, and the six workmen who were going with us to work

the diamond drill plant. We took down carefully all the information these experts could give us, quantities of various food stuffs for eleven persons for fourteen weeks, and then cunningly multiplied most of the quantities by four. We did not want hunger to be among the hardships we expected to encounter. We therefore took four times the quantities advised, and ran short of several things at the end of the tenth week! The result was that we were obliged to beg food from all three of the ships that visited us during our exile. The scientific party had excellent appetites, but they could not compete with the workmen; these last could dispose of 8 lbs. of flour, 4 lbs. of sugar, 12 lbs. of ham in one day, besides corned beef, tinned vegetables, jam, rice, haricot beans, and unlimited cocoa-nut.

After securing provisions I began collecting clothes, and we amassed garments sufficient to stock a second-hand clothes shop with, and yet we were hard up for clothes before the end of the three months. Our undergarments mildewed in our trunks and on us, and we were really obliged to change them rather more frequently than did the renowned Nansen. The gentleman who had made himself responsible for the weather in Funafuti had told us that sandshoes were the best wear for the atoll, and that we should need a new pair every week! We bought four pairs each, and said that these and our old ones must do. They did. We had a pair each to wear on the return voyage, and when the ship's carpenter had worked at them a little they weren't half bad.

When food and clothes were secured, I began to consider what amusements it would be necessary to provide. My husband said there would be absolutely no time for recreation on the island! I didn't believe him, and so laid in a good stock of books, needle-work, knitting, etc. But I might have saved myself the trouble. One's fingers were always too damp for sewing or knitting, and needles and scissors rusted every night and had to be cleaned with emery cloth every morning; and this added so materially to the dirty work one had to do that it was discontinued after the first week. I occasionally knitted for the delectation of the natives, who had never seen the work before, and were much astonished at the rapidity with which it was done, and kept up an incessant clucking and tapa-ing throughout the *séance*.

The books, too, fell flat. Funafuti was so hot, that by the time one had finished cooking food, washing clothes, cleaning pots and pans, poulticing patients, and giving out stores, one was too tired and sleepy to read. The first hour of leisure that fell to me I determined to devote to the improvement of my mind, and selected from my stock of books *Civilization, its Cause and Cure*, as being an extremely suitable study under the circumstances. I settled myself at a comfortable angle in a deck chair and set to work; the first chapter was nearly conquered, but the surf was monotonous outside, and there was a monotonous clink of machinery close by too; and then it really was hot, and so—— I woke up, when a dirty little brown hand shook me, to



see a smiling little jewel of a piccaninny offering me a cocoa-nut alofa. I always fell asleep over a decent book, and never managed to get through anything but a few shilling shockers sensibly provided by one of the workmen. The Funafuti people are very practical and intelligent, and they never read anything but their school primers, a hymn-book, and the Bible.

After providing food, clothes, unnecessary amusements, and useless medicines, and having made our wills, we took a solemn farewell of all our Sydney friends, and set off for Suva in the s.s. *Taviuni* on June 2nd, 1897. We know many clever men in all professions, and have unbounded faith in them all, so that when one of them recommended us to lay in a stock of cocaine-tabloids for the voyage, we did so. Over the results of cocaine-tabloids it is well to draw a decent veil; the tabloids must be excellent remedies—because just see what the advertisements say! But we concluded that our digestive organs were not in sympathy with cocaine.

We reached Suva after eight days' steaming against head-winds, and found that the little s.s. *Maori*, which was to take us on to Funafuti, would not be ready for five days. But we struck better luck than such foolish people deserved, for we were taken home by the Honourable B. G. Corney, M.D., who, with his wife, made that five days in Suva a never-to-be-forgotten happy time. They not only took us round to see delightful people and entrancing scenery, but gave us the full benefit of their long experience in

the tropics, in the shape of useful hints on all subjects, without which we should have come to grief in Funafuti. The doctor took me in hand, and told me all that was essential to know regarding the preservation of health and the curing of skin diseases, or other ailments, to which our party might fall victims in the climate we were bound for. It was entirely owing to his instruction that our little party had such capital health during their stay on the island. Of course most of the medicines I had bought in Sydney were useless, but Dr. Corney provided us with the right drugs as well as the best advice. The doctor must have considered our expedition a sensible venture; he proved that he did by aiding and abetting in every possible way, and doing as much as anyone to insure its ultimate success. Everyone we met all along our route helped us in the heartiest way, and seemed to take a real live interest in us; and we owe a lasting debt of gratitude, not only to our Fiji benefactors, but to the commanders and officers of all the ships who conveyed us or called on us, and also to the English missionaries in Apia and Nuié.

The five days in Suva came rapidly to an end, as all good things do, and in the grey dawn of a wet morning we went on board the s.s. *Maori*. Such a little cockle-shell as she was, although she was supposed to register 120 tons, and had powerful engines which took us along well against a head-wind, albeit they shook the poor ship and its passengers nearly to pieces. And how she could roll too! It

seemed as if she were always playing practical jokes with us, and pretending she meant to roll quite over some day.

We were not the only passengers to Funafuti. A misguided young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Wall, from Fiji, in need of a change, thought it a brilliant idea to accompany our expedition to the Ellice Group, and return in the *Maori*. The lady lay on the deck prostrate with sea-sickness all the way there, as did several others of us, myself included, and her husband, who was an excellent sailor and a kind-hearted man, waited on her and the rest of the incapables. He arranged our rugs, steadied us tenderly when we tottered to the side, tried to shield us from the rain and spray, tempted our appetites with floury potatoes and plenty of salt, and brought us a bucket of water, soap and a towel, so that we could rinse our faces and hands on deck—the only washing the weather and our sea-sickness allowed us from Fiji to Funafuti! No one was well enough to take a snapshot of the leader of the expedition, his wife, and others, as they knelt uncertainly round that bucket, rinsing faces from which every expression except abject misery had fled. It took us four days to fetch Funafuti, four days during which we lay on deck, alternately washed by the rain and spray; the tiny cabin, with ports closed on account of the sea and rain, was insupportable, and we preferred the fresh air of the deck, even though that deck was hard and wet.

It was a grey morning, threatening rain again, when

the *Maori's* engines ceased to vibrate, and we heard the skipper's cheery voice ring out, "There's your island, Professor!" We dragged our limp bodies into an approximately perpendicular attitude, and looked round hopefully. We saw what was apparently the open ocean with several islands near, and several more looking like grey clouds on the horizon. I thought one of these islands must be Funafuti, and that we should soon steer for a narrow opening leading into the still waters of a tiny lagoon round which would lie a green ring of palm trees. You know that poetical utterance about the "garland of green in an ocean of blue," don't you? Well, I did, and, although the ocean wasn't blue that morning, I was keen to see the garland of green, chiefly because I steadfastly believed that the water enclosed by it would be perfectly still. So I ventured to ask the skipper when we should get in. "Get in where?" said he. "Why," said I, "into the lagoon, of course. I'm just pining to reach that small enclosure of perfectly smooth water, where all the gorgeous coral gardens grow." He looked at me pityingly and then said, "You're in it now." In it now! This enormous piece of the ocean a lagoon! Those scattered misty grey islands so far away from us and each other, do they compose the garland of green? It was necessary to enlarge one's conception of a lagoon, evidently. This lagoon is about fourteen miles across in one direction and eleven in another, and it isn't circular at all; and the islets bounding it are of all shapes and sizes—some close together, others

far apart, and connected only by a thin white line of breakers just distinguishable on the horizon. There are two passages into this lagoon, formed by breaks in the reef, both large enough to admit the largest ship, as well as a strong current and heavy sea from the ocean outside.

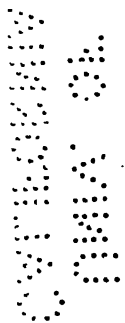
While we were making these observations, the *Maori* was very slowly making her way towards the largest islet on the east of the lagoon, and I wondered why she went so slowly. Looking over the side for the reason, I soon found it in the form of pretty green "patches," treacherous shallows formed by the growth of coral here and there. No wonder we went slowly and tortuously, carefully following the line of indigo-blue water which spoke of safety.

Clearer and clearer the long low line of green, the islet that was to be our home, came out; and just as the ship dropped anchor, out came the gorgeous tropical sun, lighting up sky, sea, and land as if by magic with new colouring, completely transforming the scene. All was not delusion. We anchored close to the lagoon reef, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, and over the side, under the shallow water, we saw irregular-shaped masses of dun-coloured coral, with myriads of brilliant fishes flashing across from hollow to hollow, inquisitive, but timid. Then on the shore was a long narrow crescent of brilliant white sand, lapped by the tiny idle wavelets of the lagoon; beyond that a line of low thick tausuna and gasu bushes, and behind a dense mass of graceful cocoa-nut palms. Among the trees we could see the brown leaf huts of



FOLIAGE IN FUNAFUTI.

DAY OF  
COLOURS



the natives, and the large whitewashed mission church and schools. The shore was covered with excited natives running to and fro, shouting and gesticulating. Soon a couple of quaint-looking little brown dug-out canoes put off for the ship, and brought the white trader to pay his respects to us and the supercargo of the *Maori*.

There was little time to make acquaintance with the trader to-day, for it was Saturday, and we knew the islanders were strict Sabbatarians, and would work neither for love nor money on the morrow. Therefore, as the *Maori* was in a hurry to get back to Suva, the officers began discharging the cargo at once and at a terrific pace. Of course it began to rain again as soon as the hatches were taken off, so that such of our personal effects as escaped being dropped into the lagoon got nicely soaked with rain-water. We hadn't a dry garment among us for about a week, it wouldn't leave off raining long enough to dry them, and when at last the rain ceased we found our clothes fragrant and decorated with artistic patterns in mildew.

My husband, with marital frankness, had told me that just while the cargo was being landed women would be in the way. I therefore went aft with Mrs. Wall, and we amused ourselves with trying to dodge the rain and watching the black boys discharge the cargo. It was amusing for about an hour to see a landing-raft made and the heavy cases of machinery hauled up, swung over the side, and dumped on to the raft, to note what immense weights the black boys



could lift, and how nimbly they got out of the way just when one expected them to be crushed to death. Occasionally one of the boys or an officer would slip off the raft into the sea in dodging a case that threatened mischief, and then the ducked one was fluent and the unducked unduly merry. But even this delightful entertainment palled after a time; there was too much sameness about it, and we were feeling chilly, and had been wet to the skin since breakfast. At last we could endure it no longer, and induced a black man to take us ashore on top of a boat-load of luggage.

There was no complaining about cold on shore, wet and windy though it was, and a very short walk reduced us to the trembling stage, so we sat down on a pandanus log and let the flies and natives collect round us. Limp and dejected with four days of seasickness, garments draggled and tumbled with wet and four days and nights of lying about on deck, we must indeed have been pitiable-looking objects, and the natives seemed to regard us as such and criticized us openly, and adversely, as we gathered from their derisive laughs and gestures. We were compelled to note that they were not shy. Two handsome girls pretended to be shy, and hid behind palm-trees, and peeped round now and again to languish at the tallest and best-looking of the white men who had joined us on shore. These girls had donned their best titi and tiputa, and decorated their heads, necks, and ears with fresh flowers; so we knew the shyness was put on for the occasion. Men, women, and children were mostly

of a pale copper colour, had regular features, large velvety black eyes, magnificent teeth, and the most innocent, confiding, childlike expression imaginable. My heart warmed to the children, dear plump little brownies ; but, alas, nearly all of them were disfigured by the revolting skin disease known as yaws or tonu.

We sat on a log while the sun lasted, and when the rain came down again repaired to the trader's hut, and were there regaled with green cocoa-nut juice, which we quaffed from the shell and found delicious. It is invariably the custom, when a visitor goes into a Funafuti hut, for one of the girls or women of the family to knock off the top of a drinking cocoa-nut and offer the visitor a drink. At first I thought it was etiquette to drink all that was offered, but later on learned to refuse when I wasn't thirsty. There was often over a pint of fluid in one nut, and I had not the Funafuti capacity for fluid. I have seen a native man take eight nuts at one meal and walk about comfortably after it.

In spite of both heat and rain we managed to explore the village. There was a clear space in the centre, close to the lagoon shore, near which were grouped the king's state house, the mission church and schools, and the native pastor's house, all built of coral rubble and cement, whitewashed with coral lime and neatly thatched with pandanus leaves. North and south from this group of buildings, a long straggling street of leaf huts stretched for about half a mile in each direction, the huts being separated by spaces of unequal size. The greater part of the main

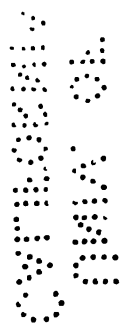
street was bordered with chunks of coral, and there was an irregular avenue of shady bread-fruit trees (*mei fenua muli*) about half a mile long near the centre of the village, while cocoa-nut palms bordered the road, or path rather, all the rest of its length. The paths and spaces were tidily kept, and I found out afterwards that every Saturday the women swept up and burned all the leaves and rubbish that had accumulated round the huts during the week. Each woman kept "her own doorstep clean," so to speak.

The king's state house is evidently kept for show. I never saw the king in it except on Sunday afternoons between the services; and all the state business was transacted in a large, airy leaf hut close by. But it was a cool, clean, nice-looking place, with its white-washed walls, large open spaces for doors and windows, and white coral pebble floor. A rough table and settee, a good American clock, a tablecloth of matting, and a Bible were its only articles of furniture. It was the only clean coral hut in the island. The trader owned a coral hut, which he generously offered to let to me for the modest rent of 10s. per week. I went to look at it; it had two rooms, about 10 by 12 feet, with apertures for doors and windows, and the ground for a floor. It had been whitewashed in former days, but the whiteness was now toned down by slimy lichen and greasy looking dirt. I felt that I should die of the blues if I had to live in such a place for three months. It was squalid and grimy, right in the heart of the native village, on the lagoon side of the island, without a breeze from the ocean,



MAIN STREET IN FUNAFUTI.

LINE OF  
COLUMNS



with hosts of flies and mosquitoes, and with the constant depressing sight of the dear little brown cherubs covered with sores and flies. While I was looking at the place the natives filled up every door and window space watching me, and the trader admitted that if I lived there many of the natives would spend the entire day lounging about watching me. I began to understand what an inestimable boon is the privacy of the poorest Englishman's cottage.

On the whole I felt I would rather camp somewhere outside the native village, and, if possible, in a leaf hut. These leaf huts, neatly thatched with pandanus leaves, with airy walls of loosely plaited coarse palm-leaf mats, and floors of white coral pebbles covered with palm-leaf mats, looked cool, clean, and picturesque; and just as I was covetously admiring one of them, my husband steamed up, streaming with rain and perspiration, but radiant with happiness, and said, "Come along now, and see what a lovely hut I have found for you to live in, and what a jolly site I've fixed on for the machinery and the camp." We all followed him. A walk of about a quarter of a mile northward from the village brought us to a branch road leading to the ocean side of the islet, away from the native village, and there, swept by the sea-breezes, and about five feet above sea-level, on a rocky platform, with a background of palms and pandanus, was a large native leaf hut, without walls, but with the eaves coming down to within four feet of the ground. We stooped and entered. There were piles of boxes and provision cases belonging to our expedition covering the floor,

the dripping shirts and trousers of our workmen hanging from the rafters—nothing lovely or attractive about such an interior. At that unpropitious moment I could not foresee what a pretty happy little home that hut was going to be for the next three months. I had stupidly promised never to grumble during the expedition (the self-repression thereby entailed nearly killed me), and so with outward cheerfulness accepted the hut; and also said it would do beautifully when the roof was made water-tight and the wall spaces enclosed with mats, and the provisions and rotting vegetation moved out, and a few other slight improvements effected. The thatch was mended, and the wall mats hung that day, but the wet clothes and provision cases remained there for ten days; and we had to camp on a roughly-cleared space of about six feet square at one end, while the students camped on the boxes and pebbles at the other end.

The workmen were busy putting up their tents in a lovely palm grove about twenty yards from this hut, and a number of the natives employed as carriers were dumping down a varied collection of machinery and provision cases.

We returned to the ship at sundown, and slept soundly on the wet deck in spite of the continuous swish of the rain, after discussing the day's doings, and groaning over a few choice beachcombers' yarns.

## CHAPTER II.

### SUNDAY IN FUNAFUTI

JUNE 22nd, 1897. Record Reign Day, and our first Sunday in Funafuti! We woke early, raised ourselves from hammock, bench, or deck, and looked round us. Water under us, water round us, water swishing down on the awning above us, nothing to be seen but water, and we had been told that fresh water was a luxury in Funafuti! I quoted a bit from the weather-prophet who knew all about Funafuti; "Yes, it rains occasionally, perhaps you'd get a shower about once a week." My fellow-passengers smiled, and said we might find that weekly shower lasted from Sunday morning to the following Saturday night. It did, that first shower, and at the end of the week we were quite satisfied that we should always remember what tropical rain was like. After the first week, however, the rain gave the sun a chance several times a day. We seldom had more than three showers a day, and one week it actually didn't rain at all!

We had dried our clothes on us during the night, and I for one was so comfortable in the hammock our skipper had fixed up for me, that I loathed the idea of



putting foot on the wet deck. However, it had to be done, and we had to have breakfast too, after which we concluded that the scene on deck was not exhilarating, and hadn't even the attraction of novelty, and as we couldn't possibly be wetter on shore we decided to go there. So on shore we went, and in going were thoroughly bathed without the trouble of undressing.

When we landed we found we were just in time for the so-called nine o'clock service in the Mission Church.

No one dreamed of being punctual in Funafuti. To begin with there were only three clocks; one belonging to the trader, which I never knew to go at all; one in the King's state house, which was wound regularly, and kept fairly good time (only it was too much trouble to go to see the time, it was quite near enough and much easier to guess the time by the position of the sun); and the other, a gorgeous piece of furniture belonging to the native pastor, and this was eccentric in its movements, because his reverence had tinkered with it constantly to make it keep even with the sun all the year round. Our blacksmith was called in several times to doctor it, and rearranged it internally as well as he could, but the pastor never would let it alone, and it therefore continued to be uncertain in its behaviour. In consequence, perhaps, of this lack of accurate timepieces, we were always in a delightful state of uncertainty as to the time of service, and during our entire stay on the island, only hit it right once—yet we lived only ten minutes from the church.

One Sunday we arrived in time for the hymn before the sermon, and being determined to be in at the start next time, we strolled up leisurely about an hour before advertised time, and found the pastor half-way through his sermon. The next Sunday we did the same, and found everyone in the midst of the noon-sleep. One wakeful boy saw us, and concluded it was church time, so jumped up and began beating the drum vigorously. Everybody hurried into church looking sleepy and dazed, and we wound up with the last hymn just when we should have been going in. After that we gave it up, and just walked in at what was supposed to be the right time, and it got to be quite exciting to guess what particular portion of the service we might strike.

But on this first Sunday we were just in time, that is to say only the first hymn had come off, and the native pastor was about to start on the prayer; but our boat landed just then, and every native who could get a peep outside was pretending not to look at us. Under the circumstances the pastor did the most sensible thing, he kept that prayer in abeyance until we had been shown into seats, and also until we had got through with "the prayer on entering a church." It was slightly embarrassing to know that the whole congregation was waiting for us to sit up so that they could get an innings, yet although we felt the eyes and the breathless suspense in the church, we did not laugh, but sat up as seriously as the Puritan founders of the mission could have wished. Then the pastor got his turn, and as we saw that all the congregation

sat still and shut their eyes (very tightly), we sat still and shut our eyes too.

After the prayer came a hymn, and as this was our first experience of Funafuti singing we were much impressed. One man started and got through half a line, when all the others joined, in harmony, such a weird savage harmony, but still harmony. I regretted being unmusical, for I am certain it would have been worth while to write down a few of the chords. The natives sang in many parts, from the high-pitched nasal reedy treble to deep thunderous bass. I instinctively thought of the rushing of wind through palm trees, and the roaring of the surf on the reef; and what a volume of sound there was too, everyone joining in with all his might, such go, and such perfect time—it was like a tonic. The sudden shock of the dead stop at the end of each verse was always trying to us—it was difficult, even after three months, to avoid a start when the whole rushing, roaring sound suddenly stopped; one never could get prepared for the almost painful suddenness of the cessation of sound. Instead of decreasing the pace, when coming to the end of a song or hymn, the Funafutians always increase it considerably; and just as you think you are going on at express speed—stop!

I never saw people more reverent at prayer and at Holy Communion, or so hearty over the hymn singing; but they always fidgeted during a sermon, and at that one couldn't marvel, for the Pastor's face and voice when preaching were always expressionless. Twice,

however, I saw the natives still with rapt attention during a sermon, once when the sub-chief Opataia preached (because the pastor was ill), and once when the white missionary preached at his annual visitation.

During this our first sermon we gave ourselves up to observation, as we knew not one word of Samoan. There was plenty to look at, church, people, and preacher.

The church was a large, lofty, oblong building ; the walls of coral rubble and cement, whitewashed with coral lime. There were six large doors which were kept open, except at prayer-time, when they were mysteriously closed by the sidesmen. The church looked north and south ; there was one door at each end, two on the east and two on the west ; there were no less than twenty-two large windows, the only glazed windows in the village, and they were always propped open to the widest extent to let in the air, and they had never been cleaned since the church was last whitewashed, but many had been broken. The roof was lofty and picturesque, with the brown rafters all neatly lashed together with native sinnet, and the thatch was extremely well made from pandanus leaves. One felt comfortable in church, it was spacious, airy, comparatively cool, and fairly free from flies. The floor of the church was in three portions. The south end was cemented and covered with clean cocoa-nut mats ; the centre was fitted with rough benches, just logs laid across from post to post, and these benches had attained a high polish from the rubbings of restless Funafutians, unaccustomed to sitting otherwise

than tailor-wise. The north end of the church, where we were sitting, was raised a few feet above the rest of the church, and separated from it by rough railings very clumsily nailed together, and plentifully besprinkled with splashes of whitewash. This platform contained the reading-desk, and two pews for distinguished visitors, and in its centre supported a smaller railed-in platform which did service as a pulpit. We, being misguided Anglicans, received a severe shock to our nerves when we were politely bowed on to the space behind the altar rails, as it seemed to us, and it was some little time before I felt quite at home in the seat of the bishop. However, all things become easy by custom, and we made the most of our elevated position, for from it we could see the remotest corner in the church with ease. The men and bigger boys sat on one side of the church, the women, girls, and children on the other; and there was a broad gangway of separation between them.

There were two sidesmen on each side of the church to close the doors before prayers and to open them afterwards, and to whack naughty boys and girls on the head with a long pole of office, which they carried with conscious pride. My native daughter received an admonitory crack on the head on one occasion all through her love of geography. She possessed a Samoan geography book, and studied it fitfully whenever she could find a quiet time; she found a quiet time during the sermon one day, and Tanei, one of the sidesmen, found he could just reach

the top of her head nicely with his pole of office—and he did. The sidesmen so seldom got a reasonable excuse for using their poles, that they never missed an opportunity.

The men and boys all had some sort of shirt or cinglet on, also lava-lavas (waist cloths), and less frequently trousers. They were all washed and brushed for the occasion, and as their skins were well covered, were a very fine, good-looking, respectable set of men. The women had been washed and brushed too, out of respect for the Sabbath, but were so fantastically and absurdly dressed, that one scarcely recognized the flower-begarlanded beauties of yesterday. Natural flowers were forbidden in church, but hats were commanded, and of course lava-lavas and tiputas (bust cloths) were indispensable.

The native pastor's wife set the example of covering by wearing a muslin Samoan gown down to her bare ankles, and managed to balance on a fuzzy knob of back hair a very perky-looking sailor-hat, decorated with the ghastly wreck of a common artificial flower. This lady, with her two youngest children, was honoured by having a seat on a mat on the floor inside the platform rails, and just outside our pew. At first I approved of the Samoan gown as being decent, but when I was obliged to observe that the lady kept it open from neck to waist, so as to nurse her infant with more ease and comfort, I concluded that a native petticoat would have been quite as serviceable, and much cheaper and more picturesque.

All the ladies brought their babies to church and

nursed them deliberately, at intervals not exceeding five minutes in duration, all through the service ; and at sermon time used them as excuses for running out for a few minutes to work off the fidgets acquired by the unusual posture on benches. Funafuti babies upset all the doctors' theories about infant digestion, for they thrive and seldom cry, although they are fed all day long, with intervals of only about fifteen minutes for sleep.

But to return to that interesting topic, the dress of the women. A few of them wore Samoan gowns made of printed calico of most diabolical patterns and colours ; most of them wore lava-lavas made of gaudy handkerchiefs knotted round the waist and reaching to the knees ; and all had some kind of upper garment, which usually did not effect the purpose for which it was worn, if that purpose were concealment. These upper garments were varied, but all brilliant except two, and they were undoubted chemises, worn outside with ill-concealed pride. The commonest bust-cloth was a kind of tiputa (tippet?) like two pocket handkerchiefs, one for the chest and one for the back, just fastened together on the shoulders ; the fashion was to adorn these pieces of rag with patches of all shapes and colours obtainable, and to edge them with frayed strips of rag in imitation of fringe. The favourite colours were red, white, and blue, and the general effect that of bronze statues carelessly draped with Union Jacks.

All this war of unblendable colours would not have spoiled the appearance of the girls, for they can stand

plenty of colour; but it was the hats that were so cruel. Just imagine, if you can, a small Tyrolese hat perched rakishly on a huge fluffy mass of black hair, and held in place by two frayed strings of soiled white calico; the hat itself covered with scraps of red, white, blue, pink or yellow print—a veritable crazy hat, occasionally ornamented with a tarnished brass button, a draggled feather, a dirty artificial flower, or streamers of red and blue worsted braid, and sometimes all of these together! I brought one of these hats away with me, and had successfully established a new fashion in hats before leaving the island.

Why should Funafuti women be made to wear hats in church? They never wear them anywhere else, and if it rains on Sunday always run across to church with their precious hats carefully tucked under their tiputas, and put them on just inside the church door. If women don't need hats as a protection from the sun or rain, if they don't wear them as ornaments or to keep their heads warm, in the name of all that's sensible, why should they wear them at all? Just by way of slavish obedience to an ancient oriental custom! Tapa! as they say in Funafuti.

It took us all sermon time to recover from the shock those hats had given us. After the sermon was over an intelligent member of our expedition suggested that the natives ought to be warned that at noon we were going to let off twenty-one guns in honour of the day, Diamond Jubilee Day. My husband said the intelligent person was at liberty

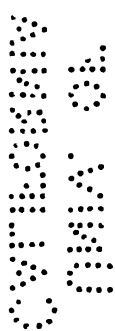


to attempt to impart this information, whereupon this intelligent person rose with great solemnity, beckoned to the pastor, and began a series of remarkable utterances and gesticulations—marionettes were not in it—which reduced the pastor first to a state of terror and finally of despair. There was no need for the poor darkie to stammer out “Me no savee”—we knew he didn’t, folks who knew English couldn’t have savee-ed, much less this poor fellow. By way of extricating himself from the painful situation, he called up one of his show church members, a man who did know some English, and the illustrated utterances were repeated more vigorously than before. At first nothing but perplexity was visible on the face of the show church member, but suddenly he had an inspiration, and waving the white gesticulator to silence he said he quite understood—we wanted to conduct a service on our own account for the edification of the people! This was too much; I had sat with the gravity of a judge all through the service, hadn’t even laughed when those hats struck me between the eyes—but I had to go now, I couldn’t watch the intelligent person go through that pantomime again. I got outside into the rain; it is good for suppressed laughter to stand out in the wet—a tropical shower by preference. My husband followed me out, ostensibly to see what was wrong with me. He felt ill too. We had just time to exchange a volume of feelings in one look when the whole congregation filed out, tore off to their huts (with hats under tiputas), switched off Sunday garments, and



THE NATIVE PASTOR'S HUT.  
(The best leaf hut in Funafuti.)

DAY OF  
COURTESY



returned in the soiled but picturesque garb of yesterday, to stare and smile at us.

The pastor courteously bowed us across the road to his hut, where we regaled ourselves on cocoa-nut tippie and were introduced to the pastor's wife, Faataape, a pleasant and amiable woman who thoroughly appreciated the distinction of being a pastor's wife. And why not? Hadn't she a better hut than the king even, and more kaikai than she could eat without working for it, people to cook it for her and other people to nurse her baby, so that she could rest most of her time? Then, too, had she not a seat on the dais in church, a place of honour to which even His Majesty, King Elia of Funafuti, was not invited?

After admiring the pastor's fine little family of boys, and chaffing some of the young folks in prize pigeon-English, we said "Tofa" (good-bye) and went on board again, drenched and tired, but very merry.

Now we made the appalling discovery that it was close on midday, and there were not twenty-one rockets to be had, and everybody had not come on board. But we were not to be done, we meant to be the first people in the Empire to start the rejoicings on Diamond Jubilee Day, even if we did frighten the natives. After rapid consultation, we decided that our alumni should fire off twenty-one rifles, as we couldn't have twenty-one roaring guns. And so they did; there were twenty-one feeble pops, and then I started "God Save the Queen" to a tune of my own—I'd forgotten the right one—and all the others joined in

with their pet tunes too, and we tried to look loyal and important and to make a lot of noise. When we were safely through with the National Anthem, we toasted Her Most Gracious Majesty in cocoa-nut juice, and spread ourselves rather, because we really thought that from our position on the globe we were bound to be the first in at the rejoicings. We couldn't help remarking what a pity it was that Her Majesty would never know how loyal were her drenched and bedraggled subjects in this out-of-the-way corner of her Empire.

While we were thus feeling content with our Sovereign, our nation, and ourselves, a stray member of our party came on board and said casually, "Aren't you rather late with your guns?" We explained that they had been let off without damage to the alumni or others, and expressed a hope that the natives hadn't been very much alarmed by the noise. He said the sound of those guns hadn't carried as far as the shore. We looked at him, and he made some feeble remark about the deadening effect of a blanket of rain on sound, but we deigned no reply.

That afternoon we spent on board, contemplating the now familiar tropical rain, and consuming the provisions of the *Maori*, and we turned in early to dry ourselves and dream of the horrid roar of cannon discharged from the crowns of the Sunday hats of the Funafuti belles.

There were many Sundays after that, but never such a full one. The people and the church became every week more familiar and more lovable, and we

had heaps of time during many services to observe, think, and compare, while the pastor preached and his people endured. It were long to tell of the things one saw in church—the lady who hunted and slaughtered parasites in the tenth row from the front, the girls who exchanged hats or tiputas when the pastor's attention was on his book, the cool maiden who deliberately did up her back hair like mine during a prayer, those of both sexes who amused themselves by raising a floor mat dexterously with a big toe so as to expectorate decently on the floor beneath, and the rare occasions on which the precentor made a false start with a hymn, causing the rest of the congregation to giggle like white school-girls. These occasional incidents were the more amusing, because on the whole the behaviour in church was most exemplary.

Every Sunday after service I went into the girls' hut, where boys were supposed never to come, and chatted about Peritania (Britain), Sini (Sydney), my children, and the girls' new clothes. Except for this short gossiping time after two o'clock service, the natives never did anything on Sunday but eat, sleep, and go to church or prayer meeting. After each spiritual exercise they stretched themselves out with a sigh of relief on the floor of anyone's hut, ate what they could get, and plenty of it, in that position, and slept soundly until the church drum woke them again for another service.

My husband and I dedicated Sunday mornings to ~~idleness~~ <sup>business</sup>; we never rose before 6.30 a.m. on that day,

we took our time over breakfast, discussed the events of the past week and the progress of the diamond drill, and tried generally to be civil to each other. But, alas, from the fourth Sunday our early mornings were marred by discord, and it was all due to Luia. Luia was a young woman of untidy appearance, wife to an old man who had been extensively married before. She wasn't noticeable in any way, except for the absurd partiality she began to show for my husband's society. On and from the fifth Sunday Luia came after 6 a.m. service and squatted down on the floor of our hut, and there she stayed placidly gazing at us. Of course we were in our bunks, and we didn't want spectators at dressing-time, and so at first we waited and waited, hoping she would go. But she didn't. Then my husband muttered things discourteous, and then he said, at first pleadingly and then angrily, "Can't you send that woman away? I can't stay here all day!" For the life of me I couldn't help seeing the humour of the situation, but he flatly refused to sympathize with me, and so I tried saying, "Tofa! alu ese" (good-bye, go away) to the woman. But she did not budge. Then I gave her an old white dressing-gown, hoping she would rush off and show her friends what "te fafine" (the woman), as they called me, had given her. But no; she was very much pleased, but didn't budge. Then I got up and calmly went about preparing breakfast in my night-gown, and when everything was ready sat down and reasoned with my angry lord in this fashion, "You'd better get up, dear, and have your breakfast ;

she's stopping on purpose to see you do it, and you might oblige her. Besides, your pyjamas and my night-dress are far more comprehensive coverings than any Funafuti garments, and so you can't shock *her*, and *I* don't count." "But I want a bath," groaned the poor man. "I daresay, dear, but I wouldn't go so far as that in present company if I were you." Then in desperation he jumped out of bed, flung himself crossly into a chair, and wouldn't laugh or talk all breakfast time, though I gave him ample provocation.

This Sabbath-day entertainment went on until we both agreed that something must be done, and as by this time my native daughter Naina could understand a fair amount of English, I told her that Luia's behaviour was not strictly conventional from a white woman's point of view. Naina's eyes flashed, and she said, "Luia no good, me tella Opataia (the sub-chief), Luia fined sillingi." I calmed her down a little, and explained that I did not wish Luia to be reported to the magistrate or fined a shilling, but merely told to absent herself on future Sunday mornings until we had got through our ablutions comfortably. After that we had a rest from Luia, but when we met her in the village she showed no resentment.

The very worst time I ever spent on Sunday, was on the first occasion when I was present in the church at a celebration of the Holy Communion. The pastor had specially invited me, as a spectator only, and as soon as I entered the church I was conscious of an unusual display of finery even for Sunday, and an



unusual air of expectancy and solemnity. There was an opening hymn sung, and then a great hush fell on the people for a few minutes, after which Ioane (a deposed pastor residing in the island) was heard in a faltering voice offering up the prayer before communion.

How thoroughly in earnest he seemed, and how much in earnest too were the others; it was impossible not to be affected by their devotion. When Ioane had finished, the pastor in charge stood up in front of a rough little table that served for a reading-desk, and which, I noticed, had some kind of vessels on it covered with a soiled sheet of once white calico. He addressed his flock briefly but more feelingly than I had ever known him do before; then he reverently raised the grimy cover, and revealed a sight which filled me with horror, though one swift glance round the congregation assured me that they saw nothing out of the usual way on the table. The taro (which was to take the place of bread) was placed on two soiled enamelled plates; the cocoa-nut juice (which took the place of wine) was in a brown crockery teapot with broken lid and spout, and the cups were just two common German beer glasses with their metal tops broken. Nothing was clean and nothing was whole. For the first time it struck me that it was a pity the London Missionary Society, which has done so much good work in these islands, could not afford a white missionary to live in the group, to make more frequent visitations than once a year, and to make

longer stays than just one day. Perhaps these things do not really matter so much, especially when, as in Funafuti, the people seem to have grasped real religion in spite of the shabby externals ; but English people like everything done decently and in order, even in such a never-never island as Funafuti. I never went to a Communion service there again until the Sunday when the white missionary arrived for his annual visitation. Just before seeing the church he had invited me to attend the service and to communicate, but I felt I could not face that strange collection of vessels when he was there, and so made feeble excuses. But he was a business-like and observant man, and went into the church to inspect the arrangements for the service, and came out with a red spot on each cheek and something like anger in his eye. He said in a pained voice, "Have you seen the vessels used in the Communion service here?" I said "Yes," not daring to look him in the face, as the recollection of what I had seen rushed into my mind. He promptly sent off to the mission ship for a clean damask cloth, clean water carafes, and clean tumblers. When I saw the spotlessly clean array, and looked round on the faces of my Funafuti friends, I felt that I ought to join in the service with them on this my last Sunday among them, and I am glad I did.

That native pastor "caught it" for his carelessness and dirt, and I couldn't pity him—cleanliness is cheap anywhere. On islands where they have white missionaries things are very different, cleanliness

and order reign in church and schools ; and even Cook's famous Savage Island (Nuié) possesses a good plated Communion service presented by the native Christians, who take great pleasure in keeping it in beautiful order. However, such are the trials of the missionaries in the north-west out-stations from Samoa.

That memorable last Sunday we dined on the *John Williams*, and how I enjoyed eating the first meal I had not cooked for three months ; and how tearfully happy some of us felt, though we tried to hide the fact, at joining in the English Church service again ; and how it seemed that we had been years and years away from home on that lonely island.

## CHAPTER III.

### SETTLING DOWN AND DAILY LIFE

JUNE 23rd. An unromantic morning indeed! Rain and sunshine, rain and sunshine, and much more rain than sunshine, all day long. The *Maori* must positively leave us before daybreak the next morning, and therefore all the remaining cargo must be landed before dark, for our independent natives will not work after sundown, even for extra pay, without a terrible hullabaloo. One of their number had been a sailor, and having imbibed trades-union principles had successfully imparted some of them to his fellow-islanders.

With an apprehensive shiver one realized that after to-day our little party would be completely cut off from communication with the civilized world for three months. After all, missionaries allow themselves to be cut off from civilization for six or eight months at a time, even on islands where the natives are known to be unfriendly. So also do traders. Anyhow, there wasn't much time to indulge in shivers; there were clothes, and pots and pans, and food to be found, and a nice job it was to find them.

Fifteen of the native boys (all natives are "boys")

so long as they can work ; when they are too old to do anything but eat, smoke, and palaver they are "men") had been hired at one dollar a day to carry our food, machinery, and personal luggage across from the landing-place on the lagoon to the camp on the ocean side of the islet. These delightful, sweet-faced, irresponsible darlings carried boxes and cases as far as they felt disposed, and then calmly dumped them down and left for another load. The result was that a wide and irregular track was marked out across the island, strewn with all sorts of oddments, and it wasn't easy to hunt up any special article that might be needed.

One of our party undertook to superintend the carrier "boys," and put in a few record days in trying to hurry them. No one who hasn't tried hurrying a Pacific islander-at-home can have any idea of what a fearful amount of energy can be expended this way with very poor results. The natives were like children in their artful ways of dodging work, but in spite of that they were made to put in much more hard work in a day than they had ever done before, and they used language in consequence which would have brought down on them heavy fines, had not the whole population been upset by the excitement of our arrival. There is no doubt that Funafutians object to being driven, and all through our stay I noticed that they worked harder and more cheerfully for those who never attempted to hector or hurry them.

The natives were very much taken with a large heavy truck we had brought with us. This truck

was intended to lighten the labour of carrying heavy goods; and one would have thought that a machine on wheels would have been serviceable, but alas, there are no paved or metalled roads in Funafuti. The roads are of nice soft sand, bordered by slabs of coral, and as heavy rain had been falling for days they were not in a condition to support heavy weights on wheels. As soon as a heavy piece of machinery had been hoisted on to this truck by dint of much jabbering, shouting, and gesticulation, and the word was given to shove all together, down went one of the wheels into a foot of soft wet sand, and there the truck stuck for minutes; and the amount of muscular exertion needed to get the wheel out on to a log or plank was far more than would have been needed to carry the goods in the native way—slung on poles.

It took fifteen natives three days to carry all our goods for about a quarter of a mile, and the boys thoroughly enjoyed the work at the start; but they got very sulky at being hurried. They wanted to take their own time and to be allowed to sit down and smoke, or get a snack of food every half hour; and when they found they were not allowed to do this they showed remarkable genius in the matter of finding opprobrious nicknames for the white man who was superintending them, and many of them pretended to work and didn't; however, they suffered for that afterwards. It was in this way; the good workers were all marked, and they were the only men who got regular employment from us afterwards. This did not suit the others at all, so they had the

conch blown and all the men assembled, and after much discussion it was decided to send the sub-chief to the leader of our expedition to say that we must not always employ the same men, but must take them all, turn and turn about, so that every man had a chance of earning some of our dollars. It took a vast amount of diplomatic palaver on the part of our leader to make such arrangements with the sub-chief as should suit our plans ; but it was accomplished at last, and in such a way as to leave no ill-feeling. The arrangement was that our leader was to be allowed to employ the same men always to help in the machinery, because they had learnt how to do it and knew the names of the tools used. Of course they happened to be the best workers too ; but the others our leader properly impressed with the danger to life entailed on persons who wanted to work a machine without understanding it. Then our leader magnanimously arranged that carrying coals and cutting firewood, and other such unskilled labour, should be contracted for by the people themselves, they being paid for quantity and not for time. This plan satisfied everybody, and the natives worked amicably with us for the rest of the time. Overtime work was always a trouble with them; they worked willingly from 8 a.m. to sundown, but growled consumedly when they were asked to work an hour later, although they had 1s. extra given them for this overtime. The trades-union boy was the one who talked them into discontent ; he would have got a good salary as a labour agitator in a civilized community ; he made



THE TRADES-UNION MAN AND KING'S HUT.

THE  
CALIFORNIA



to find  
out

them feel ill-used, though they couldn't say why they felt so. At last he hit on a fine plan; he persuaded them not to work an hour later, even for a shilling, unless they got biscuit kaikai as well. This caught on splendidly, the natives always being get-at-able by way of their stomachs; and so one night they demanded one biscuit kaikai each, which was given. The next night they asked for two biscuit kaikai per man, and went on until they demanded "five biscuit kaikai buttered!" Then my husband struck, and said they could work for their dollar a day and shilling overtime, or leave it, just as they chose; he didn't mean to feed them any more. They made no more fuss, but worked well for the original agreement. It would have been interesting to find out how many biscuit kaikai they would finally have demanded, had our provisions been equal to the strain.

But I had other things to do on the first day of settling down, besides observing the ways of the native when employed as a workman to white men. I had to make my hut fit to sleep in before the *Maori* left. My fellow-passengers came and helped vigorously, hunting up and hauling about and ripping open boxes and provision cases. We spent hours in sorting out from the mass of luggage the cases containing tea, sugar, biscuits, tinned meat, jam, butter, my primus atmospheric stove, kerosene, methylated spirits, and matches.

We were charmed to find every match wet; the intelligent packer had considered paper a sufficient protection for Bryant and May's safeties, also for

maizena, coffee, and a few other articles. The matches we dried on a lamp, having begged a dry match from a smoker with which to light it. It took three weeks to dry all the matches, and when the last packet was dried those first dried had absorbed sufficient moisture from the atmosphere to render them useless, until they were dried again. After that we let them go, merely drying a box at a time as we needed them. The coffee and maizena later on afforded us interesting subjects of conversation, when over the cheerful cup or pudding we discussed the relative values of pink, yellow, or blue paper pulped, as flavourings.

After hunting up the afore-mentioned articles, together with a kettle, teapot, frying-pan, a few rugs, and a couple of bunks, we cleared a space of about six feet square at one end of the hut; and after removing the dripping garments wherewith the place was lavishly draped, dedicated the six-foot clearing to my use, as bedroom, kitchen, and reception-room.

Then the sub-chief, Opataia, came to call on me, and for afternoon tea we had a tin of beef and a plate of biscuits. He was a courteous man, and thought it was etiquette to eat all that was offered him; and had I not noticed his predicament and cut off supplies in time, he would have perished, a martyr to good manners. Then he began to talk; he could say "koot" (good), and I could say "io" (yes), so he smiled at me and said "koot," and I grinned back again and said "io." I never knew

my conversational abilities, until I met Opataia. He quite brought me out. You'd have been astonished to know how much we contrived to say to each other just by using those two words with appropriate gestures. It was a little tiring of course, conversation in a foreign language always is; but after half an hour's brisk exercise with these two words we parted, I think, with mutual admiration.

The *Maori* left us next morning at daybreak, and now I had no nice unemployed globe-trotters to help me move cases and straighten up generally. There was nothing for me to do for a week but cook and dry clothes, for the six feet of space did not admit of much house-cleaning; and until the provision store was built, I must either sit on one box and look at another (it rained too much for drying clothes), or cook, so I cooked. The natives presented me with various new food-stuffs to experiment on; and for a few days it was amusing to find out how to cook taro, yams, green bread-fruit, and bananas. But it is curious how soon the charm of novelty wears off. It seemed an endless time that week they took to build the corrugated iron store-shed; but when it was finished and the piles of cases and dripping clothes moved into it, I turned my attention to the now all but empty hut. Yes, it distinctly had possibilities. It was about 30×14 feet ground measurement, and the thatch was neat in patches where it had not been hurriedly mended with palm mats; the rafters were neatly tied with sinnet, and had aged to a pretty brown. There was a soft green

bloom over the brown, made by a lichen, of which I stupidly forgot to bottle a specimen. The floor was covered with fragments of rotting palm-leaves, pandanus fruit, and cocoa-nut, all in an advanced stage of mustiness.

It occurred to me that I could utilize a native girl to clean out all this rubbish, and so I sent for one. She came, graceful and smiling, with a business-like tabola and salu (basket and broom) under her arm, and, after about ten minutes of work, she settled herself down contentedly and watched me scrape together and sweep up the rubbish, and carry it down to the beach. I soon entered into the joke and explained pleasantly and practically how I wanted the work done, until it was all finished, and then paid her, and said "Tofa" cheerfully. It was some time before I employed native girls again; one had to learn their ways, and cure them too of a few skin diseases, bearing unsavoury names and deserving them. In fact, I found for many reasons it was better to rely on myself, although I often got valuable help from my five piccannies, led by my vivacious and handsome little Polé, or Poré (Polly), as she was called by her fellows.

After clearing all the rotting vegetation from the floor of my hut, I spread a layer of clean white coral pebbles, and over them again a layer of rough palm-leaf mats, and over all three good pandanus leaf-mats presented to me by the trader, and by Tili, one of my husband's friends. Then I placed the sleeping-stretchers at one end of the hut, and close by them

arranged toilet requisites on a packing-case, which I had draped with what my small son would call "nice rag"; nailed up cabin pockets and tidies on the posts of the hut, fenced off small areas as hanging wardrobes with more "nice rag"; selected the centre of the hut for dining-room, and turned a packing-case upside down for a table; unstrapped my deck-chairs, and fell into one with an ecstatic grunt. Oh, the luxury of a chair after a week of provision cases! But I left the remainder of that delicious rest till later, and rushed round putting finishing touches before my husband came in. Not that one really expected him to appreciate the comfort and tidiness, but one always had a sneaking hope that some day he might notice the attempt, and pat it on the back. I fixed one large packing-case as a carpenter's bench for him, and made the mistake of arranging the tools neatly, with the usual result—he couldn't find a thing he wanted for a week. Then on the opposite side of the hut, I converted another packing-case into store-cupboard, kitchen-table and dresser combined. When I had completed a masterly and scientific classification of pots, pans, and provisions, and hung up a few more 'rags' to hide inartistic interiors, I gazed round complacently. The hut was now clean and comfortable; more than that, it was pretty, with a Funafuti style of prettiness. The neatness of the pillars, rafters, and thatch, the picturesque low wall of matting, all in different tones of brown, were really charming, and the sudden change to order and cleanliness made me feel rested and contented. In

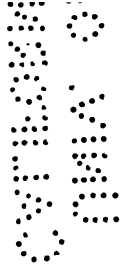
a few days the rain cleared off pretty well, so that we were able to dry our clothes, which still further diminished the discomforts of camping.

In a Funafuti hut one never suffers from closeness; the wall-mats let in plenty of air, and rain too for that matter; and the unhung door spaces are excellent ventilators, when not blocked by friendly natives. Fancy living, bathing, feeding and sleeping in a one-roomed house with unhung door-spaces; a house with mat walls that are constantly being lifted by little brown hands to let in little brown heads, with big innocent inquiring eyes! At first I did not venture a bath indoors, but repaired daily to the lagoon for a swim with my native daughter. But one soon got too salt and sticky, and even a billyful of water to rinse with after a swim wouldn't take off the stickiness; and I began to crave for a tub of fresh water and a good soaping down. How to manage this in my hut without getting up in the middle of the night was the question. At last I hit upon a plan, which although not perfect, was tolerably satisfactory. When I wanted a bath indoors I stationed my daughter, Naina, and my botanical friend Tavaū, outside my hut, with strict orders to send off anyone, man, woman, or child, white or brown, who wanted to interview me. They were delighted with the idea, and paraded round the hut while "te fafine makee washee," and hurled cocoa-nuts and other such convincing missiles at any would-be visitor; and after each rout they put their heads inside, with an angelic smile and comprehensive stare, and say, "e go way misi." It was a



MY HUT IN CENTRE.





case of two visitors or the entire village in relays, and of two evils——

Our camp took up a fair space, and was really a pretty little village in itself. There was my hut, and a smaller one behind it, my cook-house about ten yards in front; a little further away from the sea, under the shelter of a lovely grove of palm trees, were the workmen's tents, and the site of the diamond drill; and about thirty yards to the right three well-pitched tidy tents belonging to the students of our party. To the left, looking even more hideous than any other corrugated iron building I had ever seen, was our store-shed. It was an insult to the lovely palm grove in which it stood. However, it was a necessary and very useful piece of ugliness. During the day the forge, the drill-plant, the boiler, the iron tubing and core-boxes, that strewed the ground, also detracted considerably from the beauty of the scene. But at night nothing could surpass the weird beauty of the camp, with the bright red light from furnace and forge lighting up the palms and the quick-moving dusky figures. At first the roar of the breakers on the ocean reef, and the continual clink, clatter, and hammer in the drill-camp kept me awake at night, and rendered the day uneasy; but one soon became so accustomed to these noises that they were as though they were not. At night, looking seaward, with one's back to the camp, what a lonely desolate picture it was, and how melancholy the dull booming of the surf made one feel; but right about turn, and there one had a scene all life and bustle, waving

palms, the whirr and movement of machinery, sparks and flashes of rosy light, busy figures moving about briskly in all directions—a little bit of the “black country” popped into Eden.

All day long my husband, the students, and the rest of the folks were busy working with rusty, greasy machinery; and each week they seemed to get dirtier and more disreputable looking; grease, rust, rags, patches, and perspiration, were about all one could see of them. They had to scrape and scrub themselves so on Saturday nights trying to get clean, that they looked quite raw and uncomfortable all Sunday.

We daily breakfasted at 7 a.m., dined ostensibly at 1 p.m. (but my husband suffered from a bland disregard of punctuality applied to meal times, and had to be fetched at all hours), and had tea soon after sundown. Besides these three meals we had frequent drinks of cocoa-nut juice, which is both refreshing and sustaining, during the morning; and we had cocoa-nut juice again for afternoon tea, for we could always get cocoa-nut wherever we happened to be. Two drinking cocoa-nuts was the regular evening offering from about a score of our brown friends, so that with all the thirst induced by the climate, we had more than we could dispose of ourselves.

My mornings were taken up with cooking, cleaning pots and pans, trimming lamps, tidying the hut, washing clothes, poulticing patients, giving out stores and keeping accounts. But after the midday meal I was free to wander till sundown, and did. I gossiped with the natives near the drill or in their huts, collected

flowers, gathered shells, and bathed in the lagoon. But whatever I was doing, wherever I went, I had a train of inquisitive piccaninnies after me, who watched my every action, and reported the same duly and in detail to the entire village. At first this publicity was annoying, then amusing, and finally neither. As I walked out along the main street of the village the cheerful greeting "Talofa" would ring out from all sides, and smiling women would pop their heads out of their huts to look at me; those who were already out of doors would stand still to watch me out of sight, making audible and pertinent criticisms in the friendliest way. The grown-ups would put the children through a brisk catechism thus:—"Where has she been? Whom did she see? What did she give them? What has she in her basket? Who is it for? Where is she going now? What is she going for?" etc., etc. The children would call out the answers to these questions as they walked along. The chief amusement in Funafuti was the time-honoured old custom of English villages and country towns, viz., discussing other people's business; in Funafuti, however, they had introduced a primitive-Christian improvement on the game—they did not make mischief. They discussed each person's sayings and doings before him with the frankest coolness, just as we discuss the vagaries of the weather, and the subject under criticism was as unmoved as the weather is by our futile objections.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE WISE WOMAN—SICK-NURSING

EVERY day in the week a good deal of my time was devoted to doctoring and nursing. The white people came at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., and the natives at all hours.

There were Fiji sores, sprained ankles, tropical bilious attacks and sunburn, yaws or tonu, as the Funafutians call it, lafa and magesu (Tokelau ring-worm and itch), also a few odd ailments, like incomprehensible pains in an elbow, and megrims, to prescribe for, these last "not dangerous in themselves, but all needing great care in such a climate."

We had no serious ailments except one attack reported to me as "inflammation of the bowels"; I prescribed one China pilule, and the cure was worked that very day. There was a good deal of faith-healing of this kind.

The tropical sores were the most troublesome ailments; the least scratch, unless at once disinfected and covered from flies, would inflame and develop into an ulcer needing constant care.

The trader told me that the old native doctors used to be very clever over these matters, and that there

was one aged woman left now who could cure the very worst sore in a few days. He told me this just as I was in despair about our chief foreman, who had an ulcerated leg which would only just not get worse in spite of all my care. I at once asked him if he would be willing to allow the native wise-woman to experiment on his leg, and he was quite ready to do so. The trader took me round to the lady doctor, whose name was Tufaina, and who was afterwards my native mother, and we explained the case to her. She accepted my present, gave me a cocoa-nut drink, and then said "koituai" (by-and-by); but instead of putting off the engagement indefinitely, which is usually what "koituai" means, she arrived a week afterwards at 7.30 a.m. carrying a bunch of leaves and a soiled piece of calico, followed by one lady to make a fire and a few more to look on (it is not etiquette in Funafuti to do any kind of work without an audience). We saluted each other with great formality and deliberation; and after a short palaver went down to the foreman's tent and asked him to produce his leg. He did so, and Tufaina and her train shook their heads, and clucked over it like broody hens. The old lady then began her preparations, leaving the patient to amuse himself keeping the flies off his leg. She arranged a few large nonu leaves like a plate, and on these spread out the rag, and then very carefully cut up into it a pile of young gasu leaves, as if for a salad. Then she tied the chopped leaves up in the rag, and made a thick covering of the nonu leaves outside to prevent

the rag burning, and popped the bundle on to a smouldering fire of cocoa-nut husk, which had just been prepared by one of her satellites. We all sat quietly round the fire, dodging the puffs of smoke, until a crackling noise was heard inside the bundle; then Tufaina dexterously whipped it off and opened the outside case of leaves, in which was a fair amount of evil-smelling juice. Then she picked up the rag bag of leaves and alternately dipped it into the juice and applied it to the inflamed swelling round the ulcers, pressing the juice out well; after she had done this for about a minute and a half she announced her intention of coming the following morning, and went. The next morning she came again and repeated the treatment, and then she said that the next morning at that hour the leg would be well! Both the foreman and I felt quite hopeful, it was all so deliciously mysterious, and the next morning at the magic hour I ran down to his tent, and found the leg exactly as it had been for the past fortnight. My faith was not quite crushed, so with more presents in hand, I again sought out Tufaina; she was smoking and seemed to have lost interest in the case, but I pleaded, and she eventually said "koituai." This time the useful expression meant "shortly," for in a couple of hours she arrived in our camp with a struggling crab of many hues, which crab she deftly ripped open and laid its quivering "innards" on the ulcer. Tufaina said if that didn't cure him, nothing would. I believed her. When she was safely out of ear-shot the foreman

and I relieved our pent-up feelings with a hearty laugh; still I was anxious all that night for fear of blood-poisoning. However, nothing happened except that the crab began to decompose, as all flesh will under such encouraging circumstances, and I syringed the leg thoroughly with corrosive sublimate solution, and returned to our former methods.

Then the trader raised my hopes again by saying that the leaves of the tolotolo creeper were just grand for sores, if made into a good hot poultice. He said that the leaves had been taken away by white doctors who had analyzed them, and found them to contain an essence that was a certain cure for boils. So for one week I spent several hours daily patiently picking and boiling tolotolo leaves, and twice a day tolotolo poultices were applied to the obstinate leg; but they didn't hurt the ulcers at all, so we decided to return to the treatment we had tried before we got excited over native remedies, and the leg improved slowly but surely.

The tropical bilious attacks, which supervened after a course of fried ham breakfasts, were a source of some suffering, and a vast amount of amusement. They attacked different people differently. One man got greeny white in the face and stuck to his work all day, swearing horribly at intervals, but at last solicited a Dover tabloid, and was right the next day. Another man tried to stop the sickness by drinking half a pint of kerosene oil, after which he felt so bad that he came to me for medicine; I felt inclined to prescribe a lighted



match, but thought there might be trouble for me at the inquest. Another man got so weak in half an hour after the dizziness came on that he was quite speechless, and could not so much as move a finger; this was alarming to my inexperience, but I thought that, as he was so near dissolution, two Dover tabloids followed by a basin of hot bovril couldn't hurt him; he was well next day.

Tropical sunburn is much worse than it sounds. One of our party got burnt badly while swimming and diving in the lagoon, trying to save things from a raft-wreck. The next day his back was decorated with a huge blister, half an inch thick, reaching from neck to waist; there were similar blisters on his arms from shoulder to elbow, and a huge one across his chest. For two nights that man had to sit up to sleep, he couldn't lie down; but after a few applications of vaseline the blisters dried, and on the fourth day the skin came off in sheets like cream-laid note-paper. After that all the men were careful to wear shirts when in the sun.

The native patients included nearly every man, woman, and child on the island. We were thoughtful enough to bring with us from Fiji a fine assortment of influenza germs, and these ran riot among the native population. A few days after our arrival two-thirds of the people were down with it, and dismal objects they looked; but very simple remedies reduced the fever, and rid them of aches and pains, though the lassitude and coughs lasted some time. My inventive genius was over-

taxed by the need to provide varied and harmless "vai" (medicine), for without vai they refused to be healed. The people rapidly developed an absolute faith in my remedies, and I was soon as eager to keep up my reputation as if I had been paid for it. My remedies, combined with the people's faith, never failed. Over and over again I was summoned to a sick mat, by a boy with a fine grip of the English language, in some such words as these, "Misi, come, Meneua palenti sick, 'ead no good, belly no good, come!" And he would stay and worry me until I went.

I noticed that always after pig-feasts my native patients increased in numbers. For the good of the people I tried to discourage the eating of pork, and whatever medicine I gave them to work off the biliousness, I always solemnly affirmed that if they ate pig soon after taking that medicine they would die. They believed me, and abstained from pork-eating until they had leave from me to begin again. They would hang round my hut disconsolately and say, "Misi, me palenti like puaka, you tell me eat 'im." But I said "no" pitilessly, till I feared the rage for pig would make them break bounds, and that, finding they did not die as I threatened, they would lose respect for my witchcraft. Rather than that, I gave them leave to eat pork, just a little, say not more than a leg of pork at one sitting.

I never saw a native doctor practising on a patient except once, when I saw a fine-looking, grave old man sitting cross-legged with his palm on the naked

abdomen of a little girl, who lay passive for hours under this very simple treatment. I found that she was supposed to be suffering from an internal chill; so they had taken off her clothes, put her on the floor, and called in the doctor, who sat with his hand on the spot where the pain was without moving for several hours. There was no striking result from this treatment!

We heard a good deal about the strange sickness that sometimes took the young boys and girls in the island, but fortunately the excitement of our presence stopped any outbreak of it while we were there. The trader said that when people got an attack of this, they would be melancholy and refuse to eat for a day or two, and then all at once they would go mad and seize a knife, if there was one handy, and just rush through the village slashing at everybody and doing no end of damage, until they finally fell exhausted. If they could not find a knife just when the fit came on, they would rush to the ocean reef and fling themselves into the water and swim "for miles," until they drowned or a boat picked them up. Dr. Corney said that this was South Sea Island hysteria, and was common to all the islands.

The skin diseases were worse than anything else that one had to contend with. Tokelau ringworm and itch were easily cured by a few applications of chrysophanic acid ointment and sulphur ointment respectively; but "yaws," or "tonu," was a very different matter, especially when it had reached the

stage of ulceration, and attacked the bones. Nearly all the children under three years of age took this filthy disease, for no precautions were taken to stop its spreading; generally, however, it was only a skin disease with these small people, and when after a few months the sores died and fell off, the skin underneath grew smooth and clean, and the pale mark wore completely off. It was quite a common spectacle to see a small child stand howling pitifully in the street, covered with brownish-yellow sores, like hideous warts, from the size of a pea to the size of a hen's egg. No one would take the faintest notice of the child; it howled till it felt better, and then it would lie down to sleep sobbing, while the flies crowded on to the sores. Nothing was ever done to ease the suffering, and it seems that the patients have no continuous discomfort, except in one stage of the disease. It seemed to me just a miracle that these poor, afflicted little people could ever be jolly and merry; but they were a happy little crowd most times, and never so much as troubled themselves to brush off any of the numerous flies which got foothold on a raw, raspberry-like lump of the disease. Nevertheless the ugly sight got on my nerves, and depressed me. I tried to get the mothers to cover the sores with clean white rag, so as to stop the flies carrying the infection, but they wouldn't take the trouble; and they laughed derisively when I advised them not to let a clean child sleep with, or nurse, or exchange clothes, or wash in the same water, with a tonu

patient. For the first time I wished myself a missionary ; they will obey a missionary. The native pastor smiled in a superior way when I tried to get his influence working on the side of sanitary reform ; and I had the flattering conviction that he also thought I was a fool to try to stave off the "visitations of Providence."

Children generally recover from tonu in three or four months ; but sometimes they cannot shake it off, and then they slowly, but certainly, rot away like lepers. Several of the adult islanders had tonu in the face, and they were marred beyond description. These unfortunates generally hid themselves from strangers, but associated with the islanders as if nothing was wrong, although they were constantly derided by the other natives, who seemed to think the fearful disfigurement a rich joke.

Several who had only just developed this disease came to me to have the ulcers syringed regularly, and I tried to teach the women how to treat it, and left them plenty of medicine and disinfectant, but I doubt if they will persevere with the treatment. The itch and ringworm patients never seemed to suffer any inconvenience from these diseases, unless they went into salt water, when, for a time, the skin would itch and burn painfully. Some of them were covered from crown to sole with a shell-pattern of ringworm, and, as this disfigured them and they were bantered about it by their fellows, they liked to be cured. At the end of six weeks I had cured more than half the people on the island ; but to my disgust and

disappointment, after two or three weeks many of them returned showing me pimples and rings to prove that they had caught it again! They *would* wash in the same stagnant pool, whatever I might say, and it was possible sometimes to see on this pool a grey scum formed entirely of scales that a ringworm patient had scraped off with a piece of cocoa-nut shell! And then they would smoke the same pipe, passing it round from mouth to mouth, and they would exchange garments, and they would use each other's sleeping mats! Oh for a medical man for my obstinate, good, lazy, lovable Funafutians!

## CHAPTER V.

### SING-SINGS.

THE third day after our arrival we received a visit from Opataia, who came to say that there was to be a sing-sing that night in the schoolroom, in honour of the expedition, and of the officers of the s.s. *Maori*, who were to leave at daybreak the following morning.

Our first evening party in Funafuti! And we hadn't found our soap and towels; even our cabin pockets, with combs and such-like luxuries, had been deposited somewhere on the road to our hut, but we hadn't yet discovered where. Unwashed, uncombed, tired and wet—and yet we did not plead a previous engagement, but started off quite keenly to the show. The rain stopped long enough for us to walk, bare-headed, by the light of a hurricane lamp, to the school, where we were courteously received by Opataia, the trader, and the native pastor. We were shown to a seat on a rough settee, covered with native matting, facing the natives who were squatting tailor-wise on the floor in a semi-circle, so as to leave about twelve feet of clear floor space, on which was arranged a motley collection of lamps, from the gorgeous kerosene reading lamp belonging to the native pastor,

down to the primitive half cocoa-nut-shell lamp belonging to the king. Several of the natives possessed kerosene lamps of various shapes and sizes, and were very proud of them, and, although kerosene cost 12s. a tin, managed to afford kerosene for these occasions; but most of the people used half a cocoa-nut shell, full of crude cocoa-nut oil with a floating piece of rag as a wick.

As there were no lamps hanging from the rafters we could only see the front row of the choir, the mass of natives behind appearing as dark shadows. At the next sing-sing our students hung their hurricane lamps from the central rafter so as to light up the scene behind, and were well chaffed for it by the native boys, who said they had done that just to be able to see the girls better—which was true, too.

The floor was packed with natives of all ages, and every door and window aperture was blocked by others, so that what with the steamy heat of the night, the smell of scented wreaths, of refined and scented cocoa-nut oil warmed on the hot bodies of the natives, and the stench of the crude oil burning in the cocoa-nut-shell lamps, to say nothing of the fragrance from the kerosene, the atmosphere was a little trying. The natives rather like the smell of kerosene, and one would imagine that they liked the flavour too, because I saw one of the girls deliberately suck up into her mouth the oil out of one lamp that had been overfilled, and then let it run out into another lamp!

The trader and the chief men among the natives



sat on mats spread on the floor near us, and gave us occasional explanations of the proceedings. Besides ourselves, there were present as honoured guests the captain and officers of the s.s. *Maori*, and two Fiji boys from the *Maori's* crew, who were got up regardless of expense in wreaths and flowers, because they were going to favour the Funafutians with a few Fiji songs, by way of returning the compliment of this sing-sing.

As soon as our eyes had become accustomed to the dim light, we made out that the front row of natives represented the stars of the choir. They were the best-looking of the just-grown-up boys and girls, the upper class in the village school, dressed in their best lava-lavas; the girls with their brightest tiputas, the boys dressed in a varnish of cocoa-nut oil from the waist upwards. All had wreaths, or leaves, or coloured handkerchiefs on their heads, necks, and arms. The boys looked well, but the girls perfectly lovely.

While the visitors were assembling I noticed that there was a very animated conversation going on in the front ranks of the choir; occasionally one girl exchanged tiputas with another, or a boy had a wreath thrown at him by a girl. In the front row of the choir the girls sat on the north and the boys on the south, in the groups behind they were mixed. The mass of natives on the north side composed one choir, and those on the south side constituted the rival choir. The two choirs sang alternate songs, and there was an exhilarating rivalry thereby induced.

There were various rolls of mats disposed here and

there among the people behind, and I was puzzled as to what they were there for. I found out soon. There were about half a dozen briar pipes and a few dried banana-leaf cigarettes, doing duty among the crowd; this communistic pipe or cigarette was at first disagreeable to contemplate, but one soon grew callous.

When all the visitors had arrived, one dusky damsel, with head thrown back, lids half closed, lips parted in a dreamy smile, but teeth tightly closed, began to clap slowly and sing a few words in a high-pitched, nasal, reedy voice; one after another the boys and girls joined in, swaying their bodies dreamily and gracefully, and clapping their hands to mark the time. The whole body of natives behind the stars chimed in lustily too, and several of them banged vigorously with sticks on the rolls of mats, which I now discovered were used as drums, to mark the time more sharply. I never heard any Salvation Army drum that equalled a Funafuti mat-banging in ear-splitting misery. The songs resembled anthems, in that there was a constant repetition of words or phrases; the same phrases were repeated over and over again to the same tune with the same actions; at each change of phrase there was a change of tune and action, and a considerable increase of speed. The singing was in several parts, making a full, rich, though barbarous harmony; the actions were varied and all graceful, and were changed with lightning rapidity at each change of phrase. It was an excellent drill in fact, perfectly done, and yet these children have no drill or musical instructor—they just watch, listen, and imitate.

It was amusing to see the small children, some of them not more than a year old, with wide-open eyes watching the older ones, and lisping some of the words, while imitating the movements cleverly. Any Funafuti child of four could teach our best Kindergarten children both singing and drill.

The movements, which the natives consider a sort of dance, displayed the pretty arms and small, well-shaped hands of the girls to perfection, swaying, curving, pointing, and clapping. The curious thing about the singing was that the longer the natives sang the more excited they got, and the faster ran both words and actions, and the louder were the voices; and just when the din became all but insupportable the whole choir and orchestra would suddenly stop dead, and one's ears crackled painfully in consequence. I never could find out how they knew when to stop, for there was no signal given that I could detect, but they always stopped clean, not one singer ever being the veriest shade behind the others.

After a few seconds of silence, there was a perfect babel of conversation among the performers, comments on the visitors, criticisms on the singing, suggestions for the next song (they have no pre-arranged programme), requests for sucks at the family pipes, etc. Then a boy would strike up another song; they always sang "fair," first a girl and then a boy, all through the evening.

On this occasion, after the Fiji boys had displayed their vocal powers, and had been so applauded by the

Funafuti girls as to make the Funafuti boys jealous, Opataia got up and made a speech, which the trader interpreted. It was as follows :—"We, the people of Funafuti, are all very glad to see you here to-night at our sing-sing, which we hold in your honour. Although it is against the law of our island to keep up a sing-sing after ten o'clock, yet for your pleasure we have to-night set aside that law, and we are willing to sing until two or three o'clock, or all night, if you wish it. We are thankful to Almighty God that we are now friends with the white man. When white men first came to our island, many years ago, our people were afraid and ran away and hid themselves in the bush; but now we are all friends, we are under the same Queen, we obey the same laws, and we worship the same God. There are black men and white men, and red men, but the heart and the blood are the same. Since we have been friends with the white men we have all learned to read and write, and are getting enlightened, and we are thankful to be under the protection of Britain. The ship *Maori* may leave us to-night, or she may not, but in any case we thank you for coming to-night, and we hope the *Maori* will have a pleasant voyage back to Fiji, and that the white people who remain in our island will become our friends." Opataia sat down amid an approving murmur from his people, and a hearty clap from the white folks.

It was then my husband's duty to enlarge on the pleasure we had derived from the entertainment, and to say that we should like to stay all night, of course,

but it was midnight already, and we were all tired after a hard day's work, and would have to tear ourselves away, etc., etc. Unfortunately my good man had completely lost his voice through a cold contracted on the voyage, and struggle as he might he couldn't speak above a whisper. But as every white man present shrank from the privilege of taking his place, he resigned himself to the inevitable, with an appreciative twinkle in his eye, and whispered pretty things in a confidential way to the trader, who proclaimed them to the assembly.

We then filed out and found that there was another break in the downpour, and utilized it to let off a few fireworks to the mingled terror and delight of the natives ; and then gave the captain of the *Maori* and his officers a hearty cheer as they rowed off into the darkness, not to be seen by us again. My husband went on board with them once more to ransack the ship from stem to stern to make quite sure that no piece of that precious diamond drill machine had been left behind. I went back to my hut and threw myself down, too tired to undress, and slept the sleep of the weary. During the night I was awakened by curious sounds, ending in a gasp and a struggle, proceeding from the other side of the tarpaulin which separated my camping corner from that of the two students. I felt sick with terror, but dared not move, for I had still to acquire faith in the perfect harmlessness of the natives. In the morning it transpired that the scrimmage was occasioned by one of the students developing a nightmare, in consequence of a huge

crab having elected to sleep on his chest. He said he "chucked that crab," but it did not make much difference, there were so many exploring round his way.

There were musical evenings once a week in Funafuti, but none of them lasted so long as that first one; Opataia did not believe in setting aside a law too frequently, and we generally found that from eight to ten p.m. was sufficiently long to satisfy both singers and audience.

The number of native songs was enormous; the trader said there were more than a thousand. One of the girls, Tavaū, wrote out about two hundred for me, and then got tired and threw it up, and I couldn't induce her to go on, even with the present of a hair-brush with a looking-glass on the back. I tried to get at the meaning of some of the songs, and found that some of them were so old that the meaning was not intelligible to the present generation of natives; the words, music, and actions had been handed down, but the meaning had been lost. Some were in a foreign tongue, Rarátongan,\* for example; others had no meaning, but were only as Naina expressed it, "makee larfee talkee," like our "fee-fi-fo-fum," and "hey-diddle-diddle," I suppose. By far the larger number were in Samoan, and were recent compositions, not dating further back than the missionary movement; most of these were songs

\* There was only one Rarátongan song, and the natives when questioned about it said, "Mauta make him." Mauta was a Rarátongan residing in Funafuti.

made on Biblical stories, or geography, astronomy, and natural history; while some were merely a repetition of certain names. One of these last immortalizes three pioneer missionaries, thus:—"Misi tana e, misi eli e, talamoni e!" This was a tremendous favourite, and the natives always got so wildly excited over it, working themselves up to frenzied speed at the end, that I thought the words must recall some blood-thirsty savagery of old time, and was much astonished to find that the ditty was a very harmless one, in fact, when rendered into literal English, it means:—"Mr. Turner; Mr. Ella; Drummond!!!" These three missionaries seem to have left a splendid record behind them among the islanders.

The songs based on incidents in the Old and New Testaments are the most numerous, and many of them laughable. One great favourite was an uproarious repetition of:—

"Go it, Israel!  
Go it, Israel!  
Fight the Assyrian!!  
Fight the Assyrian!!  
Never mind his horses!!!  
Never mind his horses!!!"

This song divided honours with one describing the sending of the twelve spies to Canaan. All the heroes of Bible history come in for recognition. One of the very quaintest, in which I am sure there was no intentional irreverence, described the Ascension, how the disciples looked up, and down, and all round,

in blank astonishment at the sudden disappearance. The acting in this song was very realistic.

The actions accompanying the songs are not always descriptive. In many cases they are "alla sama dance," as the girls told me. Sitting down, and swaying the body and arms, is not our idea of dancing; but the natives have been forbidden by the missionaries to dance on their feet, or to wear natural flowers in church or school. These puritanical restrictions puzzled me, but after hearing the reasons for forbidding tattoo, I thought it advisable to ask the white missionary when he came what harm he saw in wearing wild flowers, or kicking the feet about in a stand-up dance. He explained that Samoans dressed in wreaths of flowers for their native dances, that these dances lasted all night, and developed into obscene and licentious orgies of an indescribable nature; and that the pioneer missionaries thought it best to forbid altogether everything that could recall these disgraceful revels. That was the edict for Samoa; and the pastors sent out to Christianize the Ellice Islanders were all Samoans, and they enforced on their congregations the laws that had been made for Samoa.

The native children had learned scraps of what they called English songs; one of these scraps was a great favourite, and there was a something familiar in the tune, but I could not make it out. Semanua said, "Alesanda, Penekuini," which meant that Mr. Alexander of H.M.S. *Penguin* had taught it them. I could make neither head nor tail of the words,



however, and therefore asked my sparkling little Polé to write them down for me.

This is what she wrote :—

“Tesi, tesi, kivi ulana setu  
Kivi u arta, mai falaoa, alofa u !”

It took me a week to unravel this, and robbed me of some sleep too, but at last I got an inspiration—the words must be :—

“Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer do ;  
Give your heart, my flower, I love you !”

This turned out to be correct, the children recognizing the words and the air with great delight when I sang the two lines. I think “Alesanda, Penekuini” had been improving the original as well as the occasion.

Singing in Funafuti is quite an athletic exercise, and severe at that ; for the songs are long, they are sung all over the body so to speak ; a great volume of sound is the most important thing, the actions are rapid and tiring at the end of every song, and there is a great deal of fierce clapping all through. Some of the boys slapped their bare arms so mercilessly in beating time, that the sound rivalled the sound of the mat banging.

The natives were very curious to know how foreigners amused themselves, and how they sang or danced, if they did either. On one occasion when they were giving a special sing-sing in honour of the arrival of Dr. Corney, there were present the

captain and crew of the s.s. *Clyde*, thirteen Norwegian shipwrecked sailors, two Rotuma boys, besides several members of our expedition, and the natives saw the opportunity and seized it. Opataia stood up and said :—" We are very glad that you have come to our sing-sing to-night. We have done our best to amuse you, and we shall be very glad if you will sing and dance in your foreign way, so that we may learn how the English, Norwegian, and Rotuma people amuse themselves. We have never seen anything of the kind, and it would give us great pleasure to do so." We felt we ought to do something, yet none of us were very keen. Most of us would have performed for the benefit of the natives, had there been no white people present ; but holding ourselves up to ridicule before our fellow-countrymen was a different matter. After some slight hesitation, however, one of our students, with his usual courage, flung himself into the breach, and sang " Little Brown Jug." The natives caught the tune very quickly, and liked it far better than any other tune we ever tried on them. But the killing fun to us was that the native pastor and Opataia looked on smilingly, because they were ignorant of the words. Anyone drinking spirit out of a " little brown jug," or out of anything else, would have been promptly " run in " and fined £1. And quite right, too. Yes, they had a *lock-up* (fale-pui-pui) in Funafuti, a substantial-looking hut with strong slab walls, and no windows ; no one was ever in it while we were there, and I never even saw the door opened, so that fale-pui-pui—the shut-up house—is an

extremely suitable name for it. After our student had sacrificed himself on the altar of politeness, the Norwegian sailors sang one or two glees most beautifully, but they sounded very dismal after the brisk Funafuti performances, and were therefore not appreciated by the natives. Two of the Norwegian sailors then consented to waltz, and they revolved solemnly round to a slow waltz whistled by the purser of the *Clyde*, amid shouts of derisive laughter from the younger generation of Funafutians. The older people were far too polite to laugh, but they thought it a very ludicrous and tame performance.

Then I felt I ought not to shirk my duty, but should do something for the general amusement, and I succeeded beyond my wildest expectations. I induced the lively old captain of the *Clyde* to dance a Highland schottische with me. I must have looked crazy, with a native wreath all askew on my head and a flaming scarlet muslin dressing-gown on, cutting such undignified capers, but it brought the house down. I selected the schottische because I saw that the slow movements and solemn faces of the waltzers did not take with my lively Funafutians. But the Samoan pastor's face was a study! He was simply furious, and would have liked to send me off to the lock-up then and there for daring to dance on my feet. He suffered more, though, when the Rotuma boys contributed their share to the entertainment. These boys were decorated in much the same way as the Funafuti boys, and began by sitting down round a rolled-up mat and banging it in time with a

monotonous chant ; then all at once they sprang up on their feet, and went through a very clever and athletic dance with curious movements of the arms and legs. The Funafuti girls were tremendously pleased, and applauded all through, and so openly admired the tall handsome Rotuma boys that the Funafuti swains glowered with envy. The pastor wanted to stop the Rotuma boys when they got up on their feet, but Opataia restrained him, reminding him that the foreigners had been asked to give specimens of their ways of dancing. Poor conscientious pastor ! I fear that all we sinful white foreigners enjoyed his discomfiture.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FATELI—THIRTY-ONE NATIVE SONGS

WITH TRANSLATIONS BY THE REV. S. ELLA

AND these were the songs they sang, O!

1. Misi tana, e! Misi Eli,  
e! talamoni, e!

1. Mr. Turner, e! Mr.  
Ella, e! Drummond, e.

2. E toki te fale te fanauga  
Isalaelu, e nofonofo ai ko  
Isalaelu, oi, aue! Te ao  
faaniutu ka fa'anake savavali,  
e! savavali, e! oi! aue!

2. A house was raised by  
the children of Israel, for  
Israel to dwell in. Oh! alas!  
The cloud standing like a  
cocoa-nut palm directed their  
journeyings, e! directed their  
journeyings, e! oh! alas!

3. Te a ese ia oe le susu  
tautau; oi e gata i teine susu  
tutu, oi, e! ma liuliu taualo  
te moana e. Ile gau o le foe,  
ae motu le taula, tau malua e  
tau malualua. Lelei o lelei o  
lou vaa a e tau malua e tau  
malualua.

3. Take away, you, the  
breasts hanging down. Oh!  
only girls have breasts stand-  
ing out, oi, e! Turn your  
paddling to the sea. When  
the paddle is broken, and the  
anchor-rope broken, wait a  
little. Wait and paddle  
slowly, good, good, is your  
canoe; but wait awhile,  
paddle gently.

4. E fakamatala mai taka  
pi e tolu, se moa se moa ne  
ave ke tatao ke maua mai se  
tama se tamai moa.

5. Finau tele o le nu'u  
suēsue mea uma e toatele o  
tagata Talu ia Lutelu na  
lilui le tusi sai le gagana  
Siamani me tagi ke lolomi  
faka tasi ma tusi i le gagana  
Siamani.

6. Na fai atu o Paulo ia  
Timoteo, e! Soia e te inu  
i le vai auri, e! a e inu ae  
Sina uaina, e! aoga i lona  
mai. Avatu ia se ipu ava i  
le ua fia inu, e! Soia e te  
inu i le vai auri, e!

7. Le apoga-leveleve, ou  
mata ke pula i te matagi,  
ko agi te aso ko ua?

8. Ma'uma'u ko taupou  
osa Juta! Ko fea, e! ko fea  
i latou? ko tafea i Papelonía!

9. Ua faalogo le Laumei  
i upu a tautai o a taeao e

4. There is made known in  
my third primer, a fowl, a  
fowl that was set to obtain  
chickens, chickens.

5. The people strove  
strongly. There were many  
enquirers regarding all things  
from the time of Luther, who  
translated the Scriptures into  
the German language, and  
demanded that the entire  
book should be printed in  
the language of Germany.

6. Paul said to Timothy,  
e! He should leave off  
drinking cold water, e! but  
drink some wine, as good for  
his sickness. Give the cup  
of kava to him who is thirsty,  
e! Leave off drinking cold  
water, e!

7. Spider, your eyes are  
bright to see the wind;  
whence is it going to blow  
to-day?

8. Lost are the virgins of  
Judea! where, oh, where are  
they? Carried off to Baby-  
lon.

9. The turtle has heard  
the words of the fishermen.

fai ai le faiva e lau uo, e!  
Tago mai lo'u lima.

In the morning there will  
be fishing by your friend, e!  
Lay hold of my hand!

10. Niukini e, tuku toku  
tainamu laukaka, me se malu  
koe i te namu! Tamato, e,  
tuu faka malosi ki te galuega  
i Kapati!

10. New Guinea, place your  
mosquito net of kaka leaves  
to protect you from the  
mosquitoes! Chalmers, make  
strong your work in Kapati!

11. E pei o se sevilou  
manamea, o i ai le mauga  
i o Peteli; ina ta tuu ia  
Lepanona, e! lau avā, ina ta  
tuu. O loo silasila i le  
faamalama o loo pupula mai  
lona tino. Ina ta tuu ia  
Lepanona e, lau avā! Ina  
ta tuu, si au uo, e! Si ou  
laalelei, tulai mai iā, ina sau  
ia, ina ta tuu io Lepanona, e!  
lau avā, ina ta tuu!

11. My beloved is like a  
dove, that is in the mountain  
of Bethel. Let us two leave  
for Lebanon, e! My wife,  
let us leave. There is seen  
through the window the  
brightness of his body. Let  
us leave for Lebanon, e!  
My wife! Let us leave, my  
friend, my beauty! Stand  
up, come! Let us leave for  
Lebanon, e! My wife, let us  
leave!

12. Nukini, e! fou ake tou  
tao lakau mo ke fagota i te  
vao mago, e! Niukini, e!  
tūtū ake tau afi mo ke tuli  
manu mo ke tuli manu.  
Niukini, e! sa fe ake tau  
titi mo fakalave manu mo  
fakalave manu.

12. New Guinea! Do up  
your wooden spears for the  
hunt in the dry bush, e!  
New Guinea, light up your  
fires for the huntsmen, for  
the huntsmen. New Guinea,  
bind up your titis to entangle  
animals, to entangle animals.

13. Ne fasia e ona uso le  
tamai oti ke maua mai se  
toto e fufui ai le ofu. Iakapo,  
e! tenei! tena! gatu tenei!

13. His brothers killed a  
kid to obtain some blood  
and to dip the coat in it.  
Jacob, e! This or that! this

e i e tenei! e i e tenei! e i  
ko tena! gatu? e ko ia e!  
ko ia e! ko ia! ko ia!

torn rag! Whose is this!  
whose is this! whose that  
torn rag! That is it! that  
is it! that is it! that is it!

14. Malia, e! Iosefa, e!  
tula' i mai ia Savali mai, ie  
savali tonu ki Aikupito,  
fanau, se tamaiti i le fale  
povi Makoi e, tafuli ou vae,  
tafuli ou vae ma mea mangoi.

14. Mary, e! Joseph, e!  
stand up walk quickly, walk  
quickly direct to Egypt.  
Born, a little child, in the  
cow-house! Magi, hasten your  
feet, hasten your feet, with  
the sweet smelling things.

15. Portukali, Portukali e  
tuaoui ma Sepania, a e tupito,  
a e tupito, i nuu sisina. oi,  
aue! fa' amiliona mona tupu  
ona tagata; a e tupito, a e  
tupito i nuu sisina, oi, aue!

15. Portugal, Portugal, on  
the boundary of Spain, but  
stands foremost, but stands  
foremost in the Peninsula.  
Oh, alas! multiply millions  
to the growth of his people,  
which stands foremost, which  
stands foremost in the Penin-  
sula, oh, alas!

16. E lua masina e faata-  
milo tuu atu pianete i tua o  
Satuno.

16. There are two moons  
revolving around the planets  
at the back of Saturn.

17. O le, o le, o le Laumua  
o Falanē, o Pale, o Pale, le  
laumua! O le, o le, o le  
laumua o Siamani o Pele, o  
Pele, o Pelelini e!

17. The, the, the capital of  
France is Paris, Paris, the  
capital! The, the, the capital  
of Germany is Ber—Ber—  
Berlin, e!

18. Amuia ko Tavita ko  
Sola ki te vao. Fana mai se  
pulu—fana—fana—fana—ke  
vaue ke taunuu atu kie Lono-  
tona; Fanatu Tavita, e! moe

18. Fortunate was David  
to flee to the bush. Shoot  
with a bullet—shoot—shoot  
—shoot quick, to reach  
London! Shoot out! David,



ko Saulo, Amuia ko Saulo,  
ko se fasioti te tama na fai  
mo ana fili, e !

run to Saul ! How fortunate  
was Saul, who would have  
killed the boy who had be-  
come his enemy, e !

19. Oi, Temese ! le vaitafe  
ua tuu ai o Lonetona ! Te  
fua ona maila i uta ie fua ona  
maila i uta !

19. Oh, Thames ! The river  
on which London stands !  
Measure its miles inland—  
measure its miles inland !

20. O le mauga Vesuvio  
e mū peā lava, aue ! puna mai  
ma tafetafe faa suavai.

20. The mountain Vesuvius  
burning continually, alas !  
Springing forth, and running  
down like water.

21. Nei maūmaū o upu o  
le lauga, fafagu atu ia. Soia  
le moe, oi, aue ! nei maua oe  
le oti faavavau, fafagu atu ia !  
Soia le moe ! oi, aue !

21. Lest you lose the  
words of the sermon, wake  
up ! Leave off sleeping, oh,  
alas ! Lest you be overtaken  
with eternal death, wake up !  
Leave off sleeping, oh, alas !

22. E Samasoni, ia tu'u ake  
ki luga ; tulai o fano ; fafasi  
o Filisitia ; tago atu tou lima  
ko pou, o le fale, lolou, ia  
vave ; aua le fiasili !

22. Samson, stand up !  
Arise or perish ! Slay the  
Philistines ! Lay hold with  
your arms to the pillars of  
the house ! Bend down  
quickly ! Don't be proud !

23. O Niué, te fenua lasi,  
e siomia te akau lasi. O  
Niué, te fekau kino e tanu  
ola o latou matua. Io, Funafuti,  
te fenua kino, e uke ai te  
manilala.

23. Niue, a large land,  
surrounded by big reefs. Of  
Niue is the bad report that  
they buried alive their  
parents. In Funafuti, the  
plain land, the manilala is  
caught.

24. O le fa'ata salafalafa  
lenei ua tatele ai nei ona po  
taina. Puke ake ki tou faka-  
ata tena, toku ata e takato  
atu nei.

25. Po sia e tou se alofa,  
me ne ke toli nia ko te Potu-  
kali? Po sia e tou se alofa  
me ne ke tuli nia ko te Alik  
Falane? Sau ia, o puke ki te  
pusa; tenei, tena ata, e taka-  
to atu nei.

26. Amuia Malia ko savali  
o kilo ana mata ki, te tuga-  
mau Malia, e, savali mai ia,  
ko te solosolo fua tenei, e  
takato atu nei!

27. Palaamo e, aue! Pa-  
laamo, te aliki Mesopotamia,  
e! ea-e-aue! a-e-ea-e-aue!  
Palaamo, e! tele mai tena  
manu, ponotia e te agelu,  
e-e-a-e-aue! e-ae-aue! Pa-  
laamo, e! Aita no na efaka-  
logo te palau te Atua e ua  
oti Palaamo, te taua Samalia  
Moapi, e!

28. Kerisiano e ua tele lou  
alofa ia te oe. Tala mai ia  
tala maia se mea i lau ma-  
laga.

24. This is a flat looking-  
glass which magnifies its re-  
flections. Lift it up to show  
your own reflection and laugh  
at.

25. Where is your com-  
passion that we should be  
driven away to Portugal?  
Where is your compassion  
that we should be driven off  
to the French chief? Come  
here; lay hold of the smoke;  
this or that shadow to laugh  
at.

26. Blessed is Mary who  
walked down to peep with  
her eyes into the tomb!  
Mary, e, walk on towards the  
cloths here, and smile again!

27. Balaam, e, alas! Balaam,  
the chief of Mesopotamia, e!  
ea-e-aue! a-e-ea-e aue! Ba-  
laam, this animal is slow!  
Stayed by the angel! e-e-a-  
e-aue! e-ae-aue! Balaam had  
you only listened to the word  
of God you would not have  
died! Balaam! The war of  
Samaria! Moab, e!

28. Christian, great is my  
compassion for you! Tell us,  
tell us something about your  
journey.

29. Te futl ka solo, mo fai  
te falava, a fafao e ki apa, o  
tuku ke loa o ave ki faga ki  
faga o Amelika.

29. The fallen bananas,  
make bread with them to put  
in a tin, to keep a long time,  
to take to the bays, the bays  
of America.

30. Ia outou ilia le sofao  
Ikepea ma le pu i totoni o le  
nuu o Lama.

30. Blow you the trumpet of  
Egypt, and the conch-shell  
among the people of Rama.

31. O Vitolia e tuu ai le  
Laumua, o Melepone, o Sini  
foi lea.

31. Victoria has its capital,  
Melbourne, that is Sydney!

These thirty-one songs are selected from among  
two hundred, and are good types.

I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. S. Ella,  
of Sydney, for the translations; and to Tavaū, a girl  
in the upper class of the mission school in Funafuti,  
for the native words.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

THE preceding chapter shows that the natives have acquired some Christian and civilized information. But besides possessing an astonishing and varied collection of "facts," scientific, geographical, and Biblical, they can all read and write well, and can do sums in the simpler rules.

All these things they learn in the mission school from the Samoan pastor, who is in the employ of the London Missionary Society. Education is free and compulsory, and there is no age limit that I could discover. The mission supplies the pastor with stationery, medicines, soap, some clothes, and occasionally food; but Funafuti is so well off for food, and supplies the pastor so liberally, that the mission is put to very little expense for him. The natives tax themselves in order to raise the sum of £10 yearly for the teacher's salary. The pastor is consequently the richest man in the island, and, as he has been trained and educated by the white missionaries in Samoa, gives himself a few airs, lords it, in fact, over king, magistrate, and natives just like

an old-fashioned rector-squire in a country parish in England. And the people submit quite happily too, they have always been accustomed to fear and obey the man who stood between them and the spirits; the "old fool of a devil doctor" the trader called this heathen dignitary.

It was strange in this far-away scrap of land to hear the same plaint about the cost of education, and about its bad effects on children. Here the children have to buy a reading book, a copy book, slate, pen, and pencil, but owing to the lack of money all the scholars do not possess even these few articles, and reading books, slates, and pencils are freely lent and borrowed. The borrowing system is carried to enormous lengths here; no one minds borrowing or lending clothes, kitchen utensils, boats, canoes, fishing lines, tools, or school books.

The trader maintains that the young people are not as clever as the uneducated generation immediately preceding them; he said they could not make as good turuma (boxes), mats, baskets, fish-hooks, sinnet, or canoes as their parents, and that this was all owing to the long hours spent in school; the children had no time to learn to work.

This set me noticing again, and I was obliged to come to the conclusion that it was merely an old person's want of appreciation of his juniors; no old people ever think the rising generation equal to their own. As an instance, the trader's own children were educated as well as anyone on the island, and they were also the smartest at work, and we found

that most of the young men who worked best for us, and were the best fishermen and gardeners, were also men who had "wasted" their time in the mission school.

Besides this the school hours were absurdly short, the children were seldom kept for longer than one hour a day, rarely for an hour and a half. In addition to this, there was a fabulous sewing-class, held by the pastor's wife once a month (so she told the white missionary's wife at the annual visitation), for the benefit of the bigger girls. This class met once while I was on the island to make new hats for the girls, but then our visit seemed to interfere with all the arrangements. The girls were not taught to be neat or thrifty with their clothes, and seemed surprised when I told them that tiputas and lava-lavas would last much longer if they were carefully hemmed. They preferred the raw edges, unless the pastor's wife would hem them with her sewing-machine. The reason why the pastor's wife had so many more clothes than the other women was partly owing to her possessing a sewing-machine. The natives take very kindly to any foreign machine which saves labour.

The girls sewed very badly and were not ashamed of it; in fact they laughed at my small stitches, and said I was "palenti big foola," because larger stitches would do quite as well and were not half the trouble.

The children seemed much more eager to learn English than anything else, and were very quick

at picking up the most necessary words and phrases. The pastor came to me for English lessons twice a week, and was really anxious to learn, but he was direfully dense, and it was very difficult to be patient with him. The difficulty with him was that he thought he knew. The other natives were so much smarter, that I thought I would relieve the monotony of the four hours weekly devoted to the pastor, by having in a few of his flock. They came, and did very well, and after half a dozen lessons there were so many applicants for admission that I had to ask for the use of the mission schoolroom. Then nearly the whole village came, and did extremely well; and then the whole thing was suddenly stopped. I was very curious to know why, but my curiosity was never satisfied.

The village school had a great attraction for me, and I would often stroll round at the supposed school hour for the fun of seeing the children assemble. Punctuality was not a strong point in Funafuti. When the pastor gave the word that he was ready for school, Tavaū (my botanical friend) would sally forth from the pastor's hut with pate and kauta (native drum and stick) in hand, and saunter leisurely up and down the village street, tap-tapping, until all the children were waked from their midday sleep. They would roll over on their mats, stretch, yawn, jump up, snatch book or slate and school dress, and tear up to the school—with book or slate in between their teeth, or pencils stuck in holes bored in the lobes of their ears, while their little hands were busy snatching off

wreaths, and dragging on tiputas, and fixing lava-lavas securely.

The children are forbidden to wear native petticoats in school. The reason for this is apparently that they are forbidden in Samoa, and Samoan pastors enforce Samoan rules wherever they go, whether they apply or not. The Samoan lava-lava of native cloth is objectionable because it cannot be washed, and one can quite understand how it was that white missionaries objected to these ancient, unwashed garments. The leaf petticoat of Funafuti is, however, frequently washed in the sea, and also fumigated and "scented" by being placed in the dense smoke and heat caused by smouldering wood and green leaves. There are occasional accidents during the fumigating process; a breeze may fan the smoulder into a flame, and before you can say "Jack Robinson" all the petticoats are ablaze, and you can hear the shrieks and hullabaloo made by the unlucky owners of the burnt petticoats all over the village. The leaf petticoat takes much time and trouble to make, but then it will last a generation, unless some accident of this kind happens.

But to return to the children. While the school drum was being tapped, you would meet all the school children hurrying along, dressing themselves as they went. It is quite the thing to dress out of doors, in view of all the village, and it is wonderful how quickly and deftly garments can be exchanged in public. Out of sheer friendliness children will exchange garments in school itself; it is quite as good an



amusement to these brown bairnies, if done quickly while the teacher is looking another way, as "noughts and crosses" are to white school children.

Little children out of school hours seldom wear anything above the waist except a wreath, but for school they always don some kind of tiputa—a pocket-handkerchief, crazy-work tippet, chemise, or waistless blouse.

When all the children were assembled the drum would cease, and the scholars then had a short interval, during which they swung their legs, or fought and skylarked good-temperedly, until the pastor turned up and reduced them to order.

School then commenced in earnest; the children sang a hymn very nicely, then all read out of the Bible, and the rest of the time was taken up in writing, or working sums. Those who had no slates would rest till they could borrow one, and the slate owners would rest while their slates were borrowed. This would continue from three-quarters of an hour to an hour and a half, and then the school would dismiss itself pell-mell, yelling and capering off the fidgets acquired from sitting so long on benches.

In spite of this happy-go-lucky style of school keeping, the children were fairly well on, except in arithmetic and sewing. The handwriting was excellent throughout the school. All the children, and the grown-up people too, could sing the multiplication table, and they didn't seem to find it depressing. They clapped and made rhythmical movements to it, just as they did to their songs. There seems to be

a superstitious reverence attached to the multiplication table, everyone prides himself on knowing it, and once, when a commissioner was exerting his authority over that of the pastor, the pastor triumphantly asked him if he were "lord over the multiplication table." That must have settled the commissioner!

The reading throughout the school was fluent, but all read as if they were intoning, and stopped with a curious jerk after each phrase. The school language is Samoan, and everyone knows that when the missionaries reduced Samoan to a written language they avoided the mistake of having redundant letters in the alphabet, and they also spelt the words phonetically, thus saving the children of the Pacific the agonies which English children suffer over an extraordinary alphabet and senseless spelling. When once a Funafuti child has learnt the sounds of the fourteen letters of the alphabet, he can read and spell straight off! Lucky little children!

Tavaū was very much astonished at an Englishman's spelling of some Funafuti words. The words in question were in a pamphlet on Funafuti, and were "ingia," "brokka," and "beret." Tavaū puzzled over them a long time in sore perplexity, then said in reference to the gentleman who had mis-spelt these words: "Me lov im, e goot man, e palenti big foola, he no sepela (spell), e go sekula (school)." After I had recovered from this good-natured and thoroughly Funafutian criticism of an English scientific man's work, it took us a week to find out what these words were intended for, but with the trader's help and

Tavaū's perseverance we discovered that they were meant for the native words "gie," "pulaka," and "puleleti." It was in vain that I tried to explain that the bookmaking man had spelt the words phonetically from the trader's pronunciation; Tavaū continued to shake her head and repeat that she loved him, but that he was a fool and couldn't spell, and ought to go to school.

The natives did not know I had learnt the Samoan alphabet, and so when I occasionally took up a book in one of the huts, and read off a few lines glibly, (they didn't seem to mind my lack of expression and emphasis) they would tapa! and cluck with astonishment. They knew I could not speak the language at all. They were equally astonished when I wrote down, correctly spelt, native names of plants which they told me. They said white people were the same in the outward image as black people, but that their spirits were different; white people were higher spirits because they were able to do such wonderful things—to read and write a language they had never heard before—and to make the water run up hill. (They had seen the pump of the diamond drill machine at work.)

I held an examination in the village school one day, in order to work off as prizes a number of toys I had brought with me.

That examination was a very amusing show. There were present, to constitute a board of examiners, the pastor, the trader, the sub-chief, the scribe, and myself. The children were much excited, stood and sat about

where and how they pleased, criticized the arrangements openly, and insisted on altering them occasionally.

The arithmetic test was the funniest. The pastor told the upper class (in which, by the way, there was an engaged couple) to reduce £15 10s. 4d. to farthings, and I awarded the prize to the boy who had finished first, and had worked correctly. Immediately there was a rebellious hubbub, and the trader explained to me that the children said it was not fair, because they had never been told that the one who finished first was to have the prize. They insisted on having it all over again, and when I saw that the sub-chief seemed to think the demand quite reasonable I gave in, and gave out another sum. Then the uproar was renewed; they said it would not be fair unless I gave out the *same* sum; but I was obstinate on this point, and carried the day. Order was restored by a policeman twisting the ear of the only quiet boy in the room, who happened to be near him; and they all set to work on the new sum in frantic haste, copying shamelessly. The first to finish this sum had it wrong, and I thought there would have been another row when I gave the prize to the first one right, who was third in point of time. As there were only two sums correctly worked perhaps they were ashamed to make any more fuss.

I was anxious to find out if the children had any idea of original composition, and so asked the trader to explain to them that they were to make up a story of their own, and write it down. This was beyond

most of them. Very few attempted it, while most of them contented themselves with writing down verses from the Bible, or Bible incidents. For instance, a mite of eight wrote: "Job was a good man, he said he did not wish to know the number of his days, the Lord took him out of his mother's womb, and he was content that the Lord should know his end." One boy of seventeen, who was the engaged youth, tried his hand at an essay on sleep. This was the result: "It is better to sleep, there is no good in waking up. This is a parable. Sleep brings nothing. Everything comes by being awake!!!" One girl of fifteen, a half-caste, was the only one who attempted a story. Here it is: "There was a ship, and it went away for a voyage. It was called the *Bird*. A rat and a crab went to sea in her, the rat kept safe in the ship, but the crab fell overboard and was drowned." But if this girl couldn't write an original story, she could write a letter well. The following is one she wrote to me:—

"Papauta, *Sept.* 13, 1897.

"To Mrs. David, the lady,—

"My love to you! alas my mother! The thought weeps when I think of you, together with the others, because of your kindness to me. Alas for my love! Dear, oh dear, my heart is full of love, but it is difficult because I cannot speak; but I thought I would try and send this small piece of paper to make known to you my love. Alas my mother! my love is very great, and it is difficult and hard because we shall be so soon parted. Grief continues to grow in my heart when I think of the days we were together in Funafuti. Alas! I do not forget them and you all. I feel I want to be still with you. It is hard that we have been so soon parted

on shore. May you return with blessing to your home. This love of mine has nothing with which to make itself known, but I have striven to make appear before you that which was hidden, namely, my love to you. Alas, my parents, love is difficult.

"This letter is hurriedly written. May Jehovah remain with us both when we are separated. Good bye.

"May you live!

VITOLIA."

This letter was written, as you see, at "Papauta," the High School for girls, established by the London Missionary Society in Apia, Samoa. This school admits about eight girls from the Tokelau, Ellice, and Gilbert groups; the girls have to find their own clothes and books and about £1 per annum, and the mission finds them board, lodging, and education. The course of instruction lasts over four years, and the girls from this school should be good examples to their islands when they return. Vitolia was selected from among the Funafuti girls to go to "Papauta," and she travelled there with us in the mission ship *John Williams*, which took our party off the island. This wailing letter was sent because I had seen very little of Vitolia on the voyage or in Apia, as I was quite disabled by sea-sickness and pleurisy. However, I managed to get up to the High School before re-embarking, and found Vitolia very happy in her new surroundings.

But I have wandered away from that examination. The distribution of prizes caused some excitement, but not half so much as I expected from the demonstrative Funafutians. The trader informed me

afterwards that the children were disappointed, as they had expected to be paid in money for doing such hard work as sitting for an examination! The dolls, which I had dressed with great care, caused a little consternation; most of the children shrank back when they first saw them, and the boy who could speak English best said: "Me no likee im, e alla sama devil!" However, they were accepted after a little demur, and next Sunday the ribbons, laces, and dresses of the dollies adorned the church hats of the Funafuti belles. I never saw one of the dolls again, and I fear the natives credited me with giving them idols. The mechanical toys took better, but even in these they suspected devilry, and preferred to see me handle them.

Anyone who wants to be popular in Funafuti must give money, printed calico, kerosene, or fish-hooks as school-examination prizes.

I had been deterred from taking picture books for the children, because I had been told that the natives did not understand or care for pictures. This was a great mistake, they revelled in pictures; and men, women, and children would crowd round me if they saw me with an illustrated paper, and would listen eagerly, and make very intelligent remarks, while I explained the pictures to them, and a present of an old illustrated paper always gave unbounded satisfaction.

It is difficult to say how far the Funafuti children could go in the matter of education; they are remarkably bright and clever at all practical work;

but whether they could hold their own with European children (as the Tongans do) is a question. I should say they have not sufficient physical stamina for severe mental work, and I doubt if the plodding industry of Europeans could ever be inculcated into these idle, happy islanders.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### STORIES\*

IN the olden times, the trader said it was a great custom for the islanders to tell stories by torch or firelight; but now only a few people keep up the custom, and that not regularly. I was naturally curious to hear some of these native stories, but began to fear that the "by-and-by" policy of the island would defeat me. At last the trader undertook to interpret, and the king, two of the trader's children, Teone and Peke, and the trader himself supplied me with several that he guaranteed to be typical.

The Tupu (king) told me one story, and I asked Siali, the Government scribe, to write it down for me in the Funafuti language. This is what Siali wrote :—

O LE TALA KAI MAI LE TUPU.

"Te atua Mataiva, o lana tama o Taliga-maivalu, o le avaga a Taliga-maivalu, o Sina. O le Taliga-maivalu mo Sina o fai faiva, o le seu. Ka o mai manu, a e mulimuli mai le rupe. Kai kalaga atu Sina kia Taliga-maivalu, ia faola le rupe ma ia, o le manu muli lea. Ko ola kia Mataiva. Faalogo

\* Interpreted by Mr. J. O'Brien, the trader in Funafuti, and by the Rev. S. Ella.

ifo Sina i le lupe, ua tautala ane ia Sina, o ia o Tinilau. E muamua Taliga, a e na te le iloa o Sina. A oo i laua i le fale, ia aumai se malo mo fakamanoa tena vae, ka e aumai se lakau taua mona faiatu Sina. Ka e nofo mai Taliga mo te lakau mona tuu. E le mafai ona tu ai, aua e paū i lalo. Ona fai atu lea o Sina ia Taliga, ia aumai te lakau taua mo tuu te manu. Ua tuu le manu i te lakau taua. Ua o'o i le taeao, ua alu atu Sina mo talo e fagai, a e le iloa e Taligamaivalu. O Sina e tautala pea ma le rupe. Ua o'o i le po a momoe, a o te atua Mataiva ua na iloa ua tautala Sina ma le rupe, ona masalosalo ai lea o Mataiva pe se Rupe pe se tino. Ua momoe ai, tagi mai Mataiva Taliga-maivalu ka momoe ifo i la ie tatou i afiafi. Ka e fano ifo i la te Rupe mai aluga tipatipa ma Sina fano e ai manu e fakatu ki lakau taua kae manoa ki malo taukatava te me ana. Pe ai te lupe ka se tino, pe si atua. A tagi faapea, ona moe lea o le isi mata, auā e iva mata, a e ita atu Taliga, ia moe malie e tagi faapea ia o'o i le iva ua noe. A e alu ifo te Rupe, o Tinilau; ua limā i e Rupe; ua fasi Taliga; a e sosola ma Sina. A ua tagi pea Mataiva i lana tama ua oti, ua faapea ana upu, Ua uma ona o'u fai atu ou te me ane pe ai se lupe ka se tino."

For the following translation of this story I am indebted to the Rev. S. Ella:—

A TALE TOLD BY THE KING.

"The god Mataiva (nine eyes) had a son Taliga-maivalu (of eight ears). The wife of Taliga-mai-valu

was Sina. Taliga-mai-valu went fishing, net fishing. There came up birds, but followed by a pigeon. Sina called to Taliga-mai-valu to save for her the pigeon, that was the bird that was following (the others). It cooed to Mataiva. Sina listened to the pigeon which spoke to Sina (and said) he was Tinilau. Taliga went first, but he did not see Sina, who followed after him and talked with the pigeon. The two entered the house. 'Bring me some cord to fasten its leg, and bring me a club (lit. fighting-stick) for its perch' (said) Sina. But Taliga sat still with a stick for its perch. The pigeon could not stand on it, for he fell off. Then Sina said to Taliga, 'Bring me a club, and stand the bird on a club.' When the morning was come Sina went out with some taro (*arum esculentum*) to feed it, but Taliga-mai-valu did not know. Sina continued her conversation with the pigeon. When night came on they slept. But the god Mataiva came, and when he saw Sina talking with the pigeon, then Mataiva doubted in his mind 'Is it a pigeon or some being?' They slept on, but Mataiva cried out 'Taliga-mai-valu, are you lying there wrapped in our cloth?' Then the pigeon came down from his perch aloft and flew around. Sina also went out. 'What bird can leave his club perch, and unloose the fastenings of his cords? Is it a pigeon, or some being, or a god?' Thus he cried, then the other eyes slept, for there were nine eyes. But Taliga was angry, for he was sleeping peacefully. He (Mataiva) cried thus when it happened that the ninth eye slept.

But the pigeon, Tinilau, came down. The pigeon now had hands. He killed Taliga and ran off with Sina. But Mataiva wept continually for his dead son. These were his words: 'I told him I doubted if it were a pigeon or some being.'"

This story excited a good deal of amusement among the natives, but I absolutely failed to see the points. Peke, the trader's handsome daughter, told me five others; and she also told me that if I put them into a book I was to say they were her stories. Peke was one of the most industrious among the younger women on the island, and when telling me stories usually employed herself in plaiting a mat. Her father would settle himself comfortably on his settee, Peke would be seated tailor-wise on the floor near him, and as many of the natives as could get inside the hut did so, whilst the rest choked up every door and window space. Peke would tell the story piece by piece, and her father would interpret, for she could speak very little English; and during the recital of each one of the following stories there was continuous and uproarious merriment among the native audience. The trader and I laughed a good deal too, not because the stories struck us as being so extremely funny, but because laughter is infectious.

#### THE TWO FRIENDS, POGA AND SIMA.

"Poga and Simā were two great friends, they lived in the same house; and when they wished to be married they agreed to be married on the same day.

They arranged to let the people know that they wanted wives, and on a certain day they went up to the middle of the village and blew their conches, to see what girls would come out to them willing to be their wives. It was arranged that Poga should be the first, and he blew his conch, and when he had finished a hundred girls came round him, willing to be his wives. Then Simā blew his conch, and, by and by, one solitary girl came towards him, and when she came close to him he saw that her face was terribly disfigured by tonu (yaws). Then Poga and the hundred girls who had come to him laughed and jeered at Simā and the poor ugly girl; and Poga was very proud of himself, and went laughing about among his hundred girls, looking at them to see which of them he would like most. Simā felt very much ashamed, but he did not refuse to marry Tinitaulokoa, for that was the name of the ugly girl. Poga said to his hundred girls: 'Now go away into the bush and gather flowers, and make wreaths and dresses for yourselves to make you look beautiful, and when I blow my conch come back to my house to be married to me.' And Simā said the same to Tinitaulokoa. But Tinitaulokoa went to her mother, and told her all her trouble, how Poga and the hundred girls had said unkind things about her, and that Simā was ashamed of her ugly looks. And her mother said: 'Come with me to the water.' So they went to the water, and the mother said: 'Dip your head in and wash,' and she did so, and when she lifted up her head

her face was clean, all the tonu had fallen off. And the mother said: 'Dip your head in a second time and wash,' and Tinitaulokoa did as she was bid the second time, and when she lifted her head she was as bright as the lightning. And her mother, who had the ruling of all the flowers in the island, said to her: 'Come,' and they went together, and the mother gathered the loveliest flowers, and dressed her daughter in scented wreaths, and while they were walking back to the village the mother worked a charm, so that a flash of lightning shone on Tinitaulokoa, and it made her the most beautiful girl that ever was. When Simā blew his conch, instead of the ugly girl he had expected, Tinitaulokoa walked up to him beautiful as the flowers, and bright as the lightning, and he was very pleased and proud, and loved her, and took her home. But Poga and his hundred wives were all struck with amazement, and felt ashamed, for now they looked quite ugly by the side of Tinitaulokoa. And Poga lived with his wives until he had ten children, but he was never happy, and by-and-by he drowned himself. But his friend Simā had only one child by his beautiful wife, a boy, whom they named Tafaki; but they lived happily together for all the rest of their lives."

#### THE MANINI.

"There was a man who found a tiny little manini (fish), and he kept it as a pet in a cocoa-nut shell, and took care of it, and fed it until it grew too large for the shell; and then he made a box to keep it

in, and fed it there until it grew too large for the box ; and then he went down to the lagoon and banked up a little fishpond for it, and fed it and kept it there until even the fishpond became too small for his big, big, pet fish. So then he was obliged to throw it into the lagoon ; but every morning he went down to the lagoon, and called his manini, and it would come up to him to be fed, and then go back to the deep water. After a time several boys came to this place from a neighbouring island ; and they saw the man call his manini and feed it, and they waited till he was gone, and then two of them speared and killed it. Then they towed it behind their vaka (canoe), for it was too big and heavy to take on board. When they reached their own village they blew a conch and called all the people of their village together, and showed them the big fish they had speared ; and then they divided it into as many pieces as there were people, and gave each person his share. Now the oldest woman in the village received the heart for her share, but she did not like to eat it, and so she put it by in a cocoa-nut shell, and covered it up with a half shell. The next day the man went down to the lagoon, and called and called to his manini, but, of course, it could not come, for it was dead. When he found out how it had been killed, he took his spear and followed the boys to their island. When he landed there he met the old woman who had kept the heart of his manini ; and he questioned her, and she told him all about it, and said he might have the heart because she had kept

it, not wishing to eat it, but that all the rest of it was eaten. Then he went up to the village and blew his conch, and when he had called all the people together, he told them to go and find any pieces of his manini that were thrown on the ground and not eaten. They went all about the village, and collected all the bones and the small pieces they could find, and brought them all to the man. When he had received the pieces he killed everyone in the island in revenge, except the old woman who had kept the heart of his manini, and her he did not kill. Then he took the pieces of his manini and went back to his own island, and went down to the lagoon and threw all the pieces of his pet into the water, and as each piece touched the water it turned into a tiny little live manini. And these manini lived, but they never grew any bigger; and from that day all manini were tiny fishes, because their big forefather had been killed and eaten."

THE TURI (SANDLARK), THE UGA (CRAB), THE KIMOA  
(RAT), AND THE FEKE (STARFISH).

"There was once a vaka (canoe) getting ready for sea, and the sandlark was going to sail her. And a crab said to the sandlark, 'Let me go with you.' But the sandlark said, 'What is the good of you coming to sea; suppose the wind were to blow, and the vaka struck a rock, you would be drowned!' 'Oh,' said the crab, 'that's all right, I have claws, and I can stick on to a rock.' So he was allowed to go. But a rat wanted to go too, and the sandlark



said, 'What is the good of you coming to sea; suppose the wind were to blow, and the vaka struck a rock, you would be drowned.' 'Oh,' said the rat, 'that's all right, I can swim, and I would swim ashore.' So they all three went out to sea in the vaka, and the wind blew, and the vaka struck a rock, and the rat cried out, 'It's all right, the sand-lark can fly with his wings, the crab can stick on to the rock with his claws, and I can swim ashore,' and off he swam. On the way he met a starfish, and the starfish said, 'You are tired; get on my back, and that will rest you,' and so he did. But while he clung on to the starfish's back he gnawed off all the hair from the back of the starfish's head. When he got ashore he called out to the starfish, 'Ha, ha! feel the back of your head, old bald-head!' This made the starfish mad, and he swam ashore quickly; but the rat ran and hid in a hole in a log. Then said the starfish, 'I took pity on you when you were tired and helped you, but you seem to have no pity,' and with that he put one of his legs into the hole, and dragged out the rat, and killed it."

#### TUTI.

"There was once a man called Tuti, and he made a great bunch of torches to go out fishing, and when he got out at the back of the reef he called out to his friend Tinitinimarepu to come and help carry the basket of fish. After they had finished fishing Tuti said to Tinitinimarepu, 'Let us go ashore and

cook the fish.' And when they got ashore they found they were close to the graveyard, and Tuti began to make an oven there, and Tinitinimarepu said, 'Let us go away a little farther from the spirits'; but Tuti would not, and so they stayed where they were, and cooked the fish. When the fish was cooked, they were going to eat some, but Tuti said, 'Wait a bit, I'll go and get an old cocoa-nut to eat with the fish,' and off he went. But instead of getting a cocoa-nut, he went to the graveyard, and dug up the bones of a spirit, and came back, and ate them with his fish. And Tinitinimarepu said to him, 'What are you cracking in your mouth?' 'Oh,' said Tuti, 'it's only an old cocoa-nut I'm eating.' But while he was eating, Tuti began to be afraid that the spirit might come after its bones, and so he made an excuse to get away home without telling Tinitinimarepu anything about it. Tuti said to Tinitinimarepu, 'Wait a bit, I'll go and gather some pi (drinking cocoa-nut) to drink with our fish,' and off he went. First he climbed up a kalevi tree, and said to the shell that held the kalevi (toddy), 'If Tinitinimarepu calls out, you shout out "Io" (yes),' and then he went up the next tree, and did the same there; and then he climbed down and ran away as fast as he could back again to his village. He told the people there that there was a spirit coming, and so they all got up and lit big fires, and went round the village, beating drums, and shouting to frighten the spirit away. All this time Tinitinimarepu was waiting and wondering why

Tuti did not come back, and at last he shouted out and called him, and the kalevi tree sang out 'Io!' And so Tinitinimarepu, who was very mad with Tuti now, called out, 'Wait till I come up, I'll knock you on the head for this.' So up the tree he climbed, and when he got up he found nothing but the shell full of kalevi; and he was *very* mad then, and he drank up all the kalevi, and ate off the whole top of the tree. Then he went down the tree and shouted for Tuti again, and the other kalevi tree shouted out 'Io!' So he thought he had got him this time, and he climbed up the tree in a great hurry, and said, 'I'll kill you for this when I get you!' But when he got up there, there was nothing but the shell, not even the kalevi to drink. So down he went again, and made for the village as fast as he could go to find Tuti and kill him; but when he got there, he couldn't get into the village at all, because all the people were round the village beating drums, making big fires, and shouting to frighten away the spirit that Tuti said was coming."

#### THE LAND-CRAB AND HER DAUGHTER.

"Once upon a time there was a land-crab who gave birth to a human daughter. Now the land-crab is very timid, and is afraid to come out in the day-time, so she stays in her hole all day, and crawls out at night. This land-crab's daughter walked about in the day like other girls, but stayed with her mother till

TO TITI  
A TITI TITI

she was grown up. When she was grown up the king's son noticed her, and said he wanted her for his wife, and so she was married to him. No one knew who her mother was, and her husband was curious to know, and asked her many times, but she would not tell, because she was ashamed to have a crab for a mother. By-and-by the daughter was with child, and she told her mother the crab, and the crab was very pleased, and worked secretly to make plenty of titi (leaf-girdles) and mats, and baby mats, ready for her daughter's confinement. When it was time for the child to be born, the crab crept out of her hole, and went to her daughter's hut secretly, and filled it quite full up to the roof with beautiful mats and titi; and in the morning when the people came to see the king's son, and his wife, and the new baby, they were very much astonished to see so many mats, and asked who had brought them. But the crab's daughter would not tell. Every night the crab used to creep to her daughter's hut to have a chat, and to nurse her grandchild, for she loved them both dearly. And every night the crab took the baby's little clothes down to the water to wash them; and she would stay and talk with her daughter till morning, and then run back to her hole and stay there all day. Now this went on for a very long time; but when the king's son saw the fresh presents in his hut every morning, he got *very* curious; and as his wife would not tell him who brought them, he made up his mind to watch and find out for himself. And he watched night after night, but saw nothing; but at last one

night he happened to go down to the water just as the crab was going out with the baby-clothes on her back. He did not see the crab, and accidentally trod on her and crushed her to death. Now his wife wondered why her mother did not come back as usual with the clothes, to talk to her. She waited and wondered, and wondered and waited, till nearly morning; then she got up and went out to find her mother; and, going down to the water, there she found the poor crab quite dead, with the clean-washed baby-clothes on her back."

One day when Peke had just finished telling me one of the above stories, her brother Teone (Johnnie) said he knew a better story than any his sister had told me, and that it was about a "little, *little* man." I will give it now, and you will see from it that the malicious dwarf is not absent from Funafuti story-land.

#### THE DWARF CALLED "NARIAO."

"Nario was a man, a little, little, tiny man. He went on his travels till he came to a small island. In this island he saw a hut, and the hut belonged to four brothers; and the four brothers sat each at a post, each one had a corner post of the house to sit against. And the names of the four brothers were these; Nautiki was the eldest, Nautaka the second, the third was called Valivalimatanaka, and the youngest was called Naka. Nario went up to this hut, and he said to the brothers, 'This hut belongs to me, you

must get out.' But they said 'No, the hut is ours. Who are you? What is your name? Where do you come from?' Then he was determined to drive them out, though the hut was not his; and they argued for a long time; and at last the brothers agreed that if the little, little man could guess their names, they would go away and let him have the hut. As soon as they said this the little, little man disappeared, and they thought he had vanished away, and so they sat talking, each one leaning against his own post. But Nariao had crept up to the roof of the hut, just over the post where the eldest brother was sitting, and he peeped through, and then he let down a big spider on its long web, till it crawled on Nautiki's forehead, and the other brothers called out, 'Nautiki, Nautiki, there's something crawling on your forehead!' So then Nariao knew the name of that one was Nautiki. Then he went softly over the roof till he got to the next post, and he let down a spider till it touched Nautaka's forehead, and the brothers called out, 'Look out, Nautaka, Nautaka, there's something crawling on your forehead!' So then Nariao knew that the second brother was called Nautaka. Then he went softly over the roof till he got to the third brother's post, and he let down another spider on to his forehead, and his brothers cried out, 'Valivalimatanaka, there's something crawling on your forehead.' So then Nariao knew that the third brother's name was Valivalimatanaka. Then he crept softly to the fourth post, and let down a spider on to the youngest brother's face, and his brothers sang out

to him, 'Why, Naka, Naka, there's something crawling on your forehead too!' Then Nariao knew all their names, so he slipped quietly down and went into the house and said, 'Your name is Nautiki, your name is Nautaka, your name is Valivalimatanaka, and your name is Naka.' So when the brothers saw that he knew all their names they went away, and left the little, little, tiny man in possession of their hut. After he had stayed there a long time he got tired, and thought he would start off on his travels again. So off he went. After a time he got to another island, and saw all the men flying kites; and all the kites flew well, but the king's kite flew best of all. The king's name was Kanāva. Nariao said to himself that he would stop all this sport. So he climbed up a post close by where the kites were lying; and he spat on Kanāva's kite, and when Kanāva went to fly it again, instead of flying nicely as before, it turned over towards one side. And all the men wondered what was the cause of this; and when they went to fly their kites Nariao spat on each one, so that all the kites flew sideways instead of flying well as they did before. Then the people were angry and very much surprised too, and they went to the place where the kites had been lying to see if they could find out the cause. When they looked up they saw the little, little, tiny man, and he laughed. And when he laughed he said 'Oom,' with his mouth nearly shut, because he had no teeth, and he had put in pieces of white cocoa-nut to make people believe he had teeth, and if he opened his mouth wide to laugh the cocoa-

nut teeth would fall out. When the men saw him they sang out for him to come down, and they began to arrange a plan among them to kill him by cunning. So they pretended to be friendly with him, and said, 'Oh, come along, we're going to dig a post hole'; and they went together, and all the men took turns at digging until they had dug the hole deep enough, and then they said to Nariao, 'Now it is your turn, you go down and dig a little deeper.' So down he went; and as soon as he stooped down to begin to dig they all lifted the post, and banged it down into the hole, and crushed him to death; and then they left the post on top of him, and filled up the hole with earth, and so Nariao was buried there, and that was the end of him."

Not only dwarfs, but giants, figured in the old stories of Funafuti. The following giant-story was told me by the trader, as he remembered hearing it told "scores of times" by the people in the "good old times."

#### THE GIANT NAO.

"Once upon a time there was a bad, powerful spirit with nine eyes, Atua-mata-iva, and he went to a village and killed and ate all the people there, except one woman, and she managed to squeeze herself into the hollow trunk of a tree, so that he did not see her. While the woman was in the tree she gave birth to a son, and she called his name Nao. She began to plait a mat, and she laid her



baby on the mat while she plaited, and as the mat grew the baby grew the same size, and so the mother plaited on and on until the mat was ten fathoms long, and Nao was ten fathoms high. Then he thought he would like to go across the sea to find out other islands. So off he started and walked through the sea, and the sharks and other big fish bit him; but he said, 'Oh, that's nothing, only a centipede biting me.' And he went on and on until he came to another island, and here he found a large village, but there were no people in it; so he went up to the king's house, and took possession and stayed there. After he had been there some time he saw a number of canoes coming; but he stayed in the big house and watched, and they turned out to be all the people of the village coming back, for they had only been away for a time camping in another island. As he watched he saw that the canoes were so heavy that the people could not get them up the beach; so he got up, went down the beach, and took a canoe in each hand, and carried them up the beach. The people all wondered who he could be, and where he came from, and why he was there. They did not like having such a strong man there, so they set about to kill him. When they came to fight him he saw what they meant, and he tore up a big cocoa-nut by the roots, used it for a club, and laid about him right and left till he had killed them all. Then he lived in peace for a time. By-and-by he thought he would like to go and see how his mother was getting on; so he

started to walk back through the sea again, and the sharks and the big fishes bit him again, but he minded them no more than flies or mosquitoes. He walked on and on, and at last fell in with another man almost as big as himself; so he asked him his name, but he would not tell. Then they fell to fighting, and Nao killed the other man, and then walked on till he came to the island where his mother lived. She was very glad to see him, and asked him where he had been, and what he had done all the time; so he told her all. But when he told her about the other big man, she said, 'But surely you didn't kill him?' and he said, 'Yes, I did.' 'Why,' said she, 'you fool, you've killed your brother!' 'Well,' said he, 'how should I know who he was? I didn't even know I had a brother.' But his mother mourned because her other son was dead. Then Nao said to his mother, 'Why do you always live in this tree? There are plenty of nice huts in the village and no one to live in them.' But his mother said, 'Oh, I dare not; don't you know that Atua-mata-iva lives in the island, and he killed and ate all the other people, and he would do the same to us.' And he said, 'Oh, would he? We'll see about that!' Then he went out for a walk, and fell in with the spirit, and Atua-mata-iva said, 'Ha, ha! I see you, my man, I'll make short work of you; I shall kill and eat you in no time.' And Nao said, 'Oh, you will, will you? Very good; come on and see!' And he snatched and tore up a big cocoa-nut tree, and went for the spirit with nine eyes, and

they fought and fought, and at last Nao killed the spirit. Then he went back to his mother and said, 'You can come out of that now, Atua-mata-iva is dead!' So she went out, and they took possession of the village, and lived in the king's house happily ever after."

## CHAPTER IX.

### LANGUAGE

BEFORE the coming of the missionaries there was no written language in Funafuti ; songs, stories, and history were handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. Now almost every man, woman, and child in the island can read and write in the Samoan language.

The men learned in Pacific languages say that the old Funafuti language is a great mixture. There are Funafuti words, Maori words, Samoan words, Tongan words, English words, and other words. Whatever sort of a compound the language may be, it is certainly in a fair way of dying out altogether in favour of Samoan. Therefore if it is of vital importance the language should be got at now.

The base of the Funafuti language must be Samoan, because a Samoan has always been able to make himself understood by the Funafutians. The pioneer missionaries learned this fact, and to save time and money despatched native Samoan pastors there ; and the Bible, hymn books, and

school books in the Samoan language were supplied to the mission school.

The Samoan language is therefore the church and school language in Funafuti, and is rapidly becoming the general language for this reason, and also because the Samoan pastors think Peritania (Britannia) is heaven, and Samoa the gate thereto, and all other islands, their language, manners, and customs, beneath contempt. The old trader complains that lately the young people don't seem able to understand the old language, and that even in their play they use a great deal of Samoan.

The children were always anxious to teach me to speak Funafutian, and whenever we were walking or sitting together they would pick up a flower, or shell, or piece of food or clothing, and say the native name of it very slowly and carefully, and make me repeat it over and over again until my pronunciation became fairly satisfactory. They would shriek with laughter over some of my attempts, and would say "Koot" (good) very patronizingly when I succeeded better than usual. They knew that I was more interested in Funafutian than in Samoan, and so would say carefully, "Funafutian—puaka, Samoan—pua'a, Ingaliss—peek" (pig). When they did not know the English word I would supply it, and so we formed a mutual improvement society. The construction of sentences was very puzzling; there were so many stray letters and words sprinkled round that didn't seem to mean anything when caught loose, but when strung into a sentence were vastly important.

These objectionable letters and words daunted me, and I gave up trying to learn to speak connectedly, although I was sorry to rob the natives of a grand source of amusement. I found that two or three verbs, one or two phrases, and about two hundred nouns carried me through triumphantly, especially when I had instructed the children in pigeon-English.

Such magical words as "Talofa," "Tapa!" and "Ko i tuai" were invaluable. I believe if all the languages in daily use were written down, two-thirds of it would consist of "Talofa" and "Ko i tuai." I found that it was absolutely necessary to learn the sentence "Alu ese" (go away) during the first week.

"Talofa" is a form of greeting, and means almost anything from a "How de do" to "I love you." It is what you say for "Good morning," "How are you?" "Here we are again!" "Well, I never!" "How nice!" "I like you," "I love you," and ever so much more.

"Tapa" (pronounced "tah-bah" quickly) is the prize word. You should never open your mouth in Funafuti without letting it pop out. It is an exclamation. It means anything you like, according to your intonation, the expression of your face, or your gestures while using it. In Australia if you wish to express unbelief vulgarly you say "Wotchergiven us?", in London the street urchins say "Garn!", but in Funafuti you say "Tapa!" If you wish to say "How wonderful!" "How awful!" or "Stop that!"; if you wish to express contempt, admiration, astonishment, anger, disgust, unbelief, or "cheek" of any

kind in Funafuti, you say "Tapa!" When an infant upsets a kumete of food a Funafuti mother says angrily, "Tapa!" When a palagi (white) boy tells a Funafuti girl that he loves her, she replies derisively, and with a fetching roll of her bright eyes, "Tapa!" When the king saw our diamond drill machine begin to work, he started back in mingled terror and astonishment and said, "Tapa!"

As for "Ko i tuai," it is unnecessary to say more than that it is the convenient expression "Bine-by." You can satisfy your neighbours, relieve yourselves from embarrassing circumstances, evade responsibilities, and get an easy time all round by a skilful and amiable use of the words "Ko i tuai." Constant use of the expression, even in pursuit of the same object, does not detract from its value. "Ko i tuai" for ever!

I have already said that a few English words have become incorporated into the Funafuti language, but spelt phonetically, *à la* Samoa, they are not recognizable. You would not know them either when used by a Funafutian, unless you had been told about them, and were consequently listening for them. Among the most amusing of these words were some English names given to the islanders. Would anyone recognize "Pore" (Paur-ray), "Petise" (Pet-ee-say), "Make" (Mah-kay), as "Polly," "Betsy," and "Maggie."

Perhaps specimens of English as she is spoken in Funafuti may interest others besides philologists. The following is a conversation between myself and

the boy who spoke the best English, and was therefore always sent to me with any goods the natives wished to barter :—

*Boy.* “Misi, you wantee fua-moa?” (eggs, or lit., “the fruit of the hen”).

*Me.* “Io, me palenti likee good fua-moa.”

*Boy.* “Ee palenti koot, ee new born a!”

*Me.* “Me tink you palenti lie—you give me fua-moa palenti pooh!”

*Boy.* “Me no lie, misi, me tink ee koot, me no lookee in-a-side!”

Here I collapsed, helpless with laughter, and the boy's anxious face brightened up, and he shouted with glee; and the laugh and the joke flashed through the length of the village like lightning.

With reference to the above conversation I must explain that “pooh” is the native word for an evil smell; also that “lie” is the only word the natives know of to express what is not true. There is no mincing matters in Funafuti; there are no equivalents for “fib,” “mistake,” “untruth”; anything that is not the truth is a “lie” without mitigation. In the same way the word equivalent to our “fool” is used much more frequently in ordinary conversation, so that when they are supposed to be speaking English, the natives often astonish you by saying you are “palenti big foola,” when they merely mean to imply that you are somewhat silly or stupid. For instance, they thought my swimming bad, and my daughter said, “You palenti big fool, no good,” meaning to let me



know that my method of swimming did not meet with her approval. It is very amusing to be called a fool in this way by one's native daughter, who smiles winningly and speaks softly and sweetly too, while she is treating you to the experience.

Very few ever tried to write English. The following is a letter written in English by the native pastor, with the help of a Samoan-English grammar and dictionary. I was told too that it only took him three days' hard work to compose it :—

" June. 22. 1897.

" Dear Sir.

" Professor. T. W. E. David. &c. and George Sweet. My Friends. I am very glad to meet your. I thank you very to much, you present jams (yams). I give you Fowl and cocoanuts. I love to yours.

" I am

" Simona.

" The Teachers."

Tavaū, my botanical friend, picked up my diary and pencil one day, and wrote in it: " I am Tavaū the girl of Funafuti. Tavita (meaning Professor David) goot man, me love im. I nevere ufo get you."

The children had very quick ears for sound, and always derided our mispronunciation of their names. Tavaū would strike herself on the chest and say, " me Tavau " (tah-vah-oo), then she would point to one of our party, screw up her ample mouth, and say, " E say 'Tevveou,'" giving an Australian's cockney pronunciation of the vowel sounds of her name to perfection. Even the men occasionally objected to the manner in which our party maltreated their names ;

for instance, an extremely-intelligent and polite native rejoicing in the name "Meneua" (which should be pronounced "May-nay-oo-ah" very rapidly), said to me one day, "Misi, you say 'Meneua' good, e" (pointing with mingled reproach, sorrow, and indignation in his face to one of the men of our party), "E say 'Manure'! Dat no good, very bad." No wonder the poor man objected. Most of our party failed to catch the pretty Italian sounds of the native vowels. We were all struck with the musical vowel sounds—the soft consonants and the general sweetness and richness of the language and voices of the people. The voices of the Anglo-Australians sounded harsh and grating by contrast, a fact which did not escape the quick observation of our Funafuti friends, who never lost any opportunity of laughing at us, our speech and our ways; yet in spite of the fact that they laughed at us persistently, they tried very hard to imitate us in dress and manner, and really made good progress with English, which they lisped with an extremely pretty accent.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE KING, THE SUB-CHIEF, AND THE TRADER

THERE is a king in Funafuti, and a fine old gentleman he is too. His title is the Tupu, and his Christian name is Elia.

By the way there are no such things as surnames in Funafuti. Every man has his Christian name, and every woman has her Christian name, and that only. Men and women here never address each other by titles, not even by an equivalent to the humble "Mr." and "Mrs."; children never address their parents as "father" or "mother," but call them "Solomona" (Solomon), or "Iesapela" (Jezebel), as the case may be. The smallest talking youngster on the island in speaking to the king, would call him "Elia."

I tried hard to see the advantage of being a king in Funafuti, but couldn't. The king's hut was not so good as the native pastor's, his clothes were no better than those of his subjects; and his food was the same—cocoa-nut, fish, and taro. He had only one voice in the making of laws on the island, and seemed to look up to the Samoan pastor as an authority

in things temporal as well as spiritual. He certainly received a salary of five dollars per annum from his subjects (that is, one-tenth of what is considered necessary for the pastor); and he had a fair amount of cocoa-nut and taro land, but less than some of his subjects. Since the island has been under British protection the king is a nominal king only, an ornamental, but not very expensive, head to a nice little republic. In old days the king had more authority, but was not despotic by any means; he had one beautiful prerogative, which was this, that any criminal could be saved by him from justice, if the said criminal were smart enough to make his way to the king's house before he was caught by his enraged fellows! So that the king's house was a sanctuary, or city of refuge. I could not find out how long a refugee had to keep sanctuary; probably the king found his prerogative burdensome.

The Funafutians seem never to have had any strict notion about caste, such as is characteristic of the Samoans; any Funafuti person is as good as another. They have a great respect for law, and have always inclined to be a law-abiding folk; and they respect a man and his office, when they have elected him as king, sub-chief, or policeman.

They do not believe in allowing the king's favourite to rule, and on one occasion (before being under British rule) they threatened to depose the king, because Tili, his favourite, had too much to say in the management of the island. It seems that on this occasion the old king wept, and said if they deposed

him he would be obliged to go right away to die on another island, for he could not bear to live in Funafuti after such a disgrace. After a big palaver the people announced their intention of retaining him as king, provided he gave up his favourite. The king promised, and has kept his word; and Tili has no more voice than other men in affairs of state, although he is a fine-looking, good, and able man, and is, in addition to this, a man rich in cocoa-nut land.

The king was well on in years, and did little but sleep, and eat, and "take the chair" (really sit on a mat of state) at public meetings, and he always got away from these last as soon as he decently could. He was a good-looking man, grave, dignified, and courteous, but always seemed somewhat bored; and he never turned up at any frivolity such as a singing. He could read his Samoan Bible and hymn-book, and seemed to like doing so; and he was never absent from his seat of state outside the platform-rail in church. He scrupulously attended every service. He must have learnt to read after he had reached man's estate, because no one on the island could read or write before the advent of the missionaries, and the mission is not more than thirty years old.

He did not care to move about much, but the native pastor once insisted on His Majesty accompanying him and the school-children on a week's picnic round the various islets of the atoll. The pastor, after eighteen months of keeping up his dignity and

lording it over his flock, had made up his mind that he was going in the mission ship to Apia for a holiday with all his family; this made him restless, and in order to make a reasonable excuse for cutting school work for a week, he organized a farewell picnic for the school, and carried the poor old king round with him as a nineteenth-century spiritual captive. The king looked more bored than ever on his return, and had heavy arrears of sleep to make up.

Poor old chap, he hadn't even the solace of a pipe, for he did not smoke. I wondered why the king was the only non-smoker on the island, and asked the trader the reason, and he gave me the following instructive information.

Elia had been a smoker in his young days, and dearly loved his pipe; but in those old days the trading ships came seldom, and money and cocoanuts were scarcer, and very often tobacco was very scarce. When the king had finished his, he would demand some from those of his subjects known to possess it. But the subjects didn't see why a king should expect more luxuries than any other man, and firmly declined to hand over to royalty their few remaining figs of tobacco. Thereupon the affronted monarch pondered in his own mind, and came to the conclusion that, as this craving for tobacco only put him into a humiliating position, he would give up smoking, cure himself of the craving, and so save himself the ignominy of being refused supplies by his subjects. He did so; and has never smoked since! And this is the sort of man

whom white people would loftily describe as a "savage"!

Two days after our arrival on the island we waited on the Tupu, made a formal call on him as the representative of government in the land, and presented a letter of introduction we had received from the High Commissioner, a letter which explained who we were and what was our errand. In order to comply with the customs of the Pacific islanders, we at the same time presented him with a sack of yams. Yams are great luxuries in Funafuti, as they cannot be cultivated there, the soil not being rich enough to grow them. On the same day we also sent a similar bag of yams to Opataia, and one to the native pastor. We were surprised to see that these three bags of yams remained for two days where we had left them, unopened. We began to wonder if the three dignitaries were offended in any way. But on the third day the mystery was explained; the big conch was blown, and all the island assembled, the three bags of yams were carried to the state house, and equally divided among all the people according to their families. How many civilized monarchs, priests, or premiers would have parted so generously with a handsome gift! Of course, if the Funafuti monarch hadn't done this, his people would have growled audibly under his royal nose—but still!

After this we did not see the king for about a week, and then, as our machinery was ready for work, and the steam up, we invited Elia to come

and start the machinery. He said he would come if he wasn't afraid, and if he was afraid he would send Opataia.

He wasn't afraid; and arrived in company with Opataia, the trader, and nearly the whole village, and he wore a hat, too, for the occasion, a decoration that he usually allowed himself on Sundays only. He was shown what to do, and screwed up his courage and turned on the screw, but started back with a "Tapa!" of terrified amazement when he saw the wheels go round. Then my husband made a little speech, which the trader interpreted to the people, and called for three cheers for the Tupu; and the Tupu took off his hat, as he saw the white men do, and cheered himself right lustily. Then we made him a present of a tin of meat, which we hoped he would be allowed to keep for himself. Often after this occasion he would stroll round to the drill-camp to watch the progress of the work, and to make enquiries as to how many fathoms we had sunk; for we had made him understand that his turning on the screw to start the work was to bring good fortune, and he was mightily flattered, and a trifle anxious too.

Soon after our arrival the king fell a victim to a mild attack of influenza, which ended up with a bad attack of bronchial catarrh. He sent for me to cure him. My fame as a medicine woman was already established, through a marvellous cure wrought on a bilious child by one cascara tabloid. The king wanted a tabloid too, and I gave him



one, and rubbed his chest with eucalyptus oil to his immense gratification; for he liked the smell of it! I tried hard to rub it in; my arm ached and my palm was excoriated, but I am sure that oil did not penetrate his sable majesty's skin. Such a skin—wrinkled, leathery, pachydermatous! He was much better the next day, and said I had cured him.

He was so taken with the eucalyptus oil that I gave him a small bottle of it for himself, which he called sau-sau (scent!) and treasured jealously.

After this I used to call on him regularly without first sending word that I was coming; for by this time I had discovered it was unnecessary to pre-arrange an audience. The children always followed me wherever I went, and would always want to know where I was going, and when I said "Tupu," two or three of them would tear off to the king's hut, where he was generally to be found, shirtless and happy, asleep on the platform in his hut. The first in the race would shake the king unceremoniously by the arm and yell out, "Elia! Elia! *te fafine palagi*" (Elia, Elia, the woman foreigner), and the king would sit up half dazed but quite amiable, and as soon as he was sufficiently awake to realize who I was would make a frantic dash for his shirt, pull it hurriedly over his head while I looked on, then, when the shirt was on correctly, tails outside, he would get off the platform, bow courteously, shake hands, wave me to a mat, and tell one of the girls to offer me a cocoa-nut drink.

Elia is a widower, with no family of his own, but he adopts stray boys and girls from time to time, and has a fine family of these adopted children of all ages, who live with him, and care for him as much as they could for a real father. It would seem that all orphans are wards of the king, for he is responsible up to a certain extent for them, not by written law, but by the law of custom.

One of his adopted daughters, Solonaima, is quite the belle of the island, and is as good as she is charming. Her mother died soon after the birth of this child, and before dying sent for the king and confided her child and her cocoa-nut land to his care; she probably guessed that her husband would marry again. Elia accepted the charge, and has been a good father to Solonaima, even refusing her in marriage to lovers of whom he did not approve.

Solonaima has had many offers of marriage, but says she "no likee Funafuti boy," but that she "palenti likee palagi boy." But I fear her kind foster-father will have to give her to a Funafuti boy some day, unless she elects to be classed as "fafine taka" (old maid); for the palagi boys admire and respect, but do not offer matrimony. The "palagi boys" of our party greatly admired the dignified and sweet-faced Solonaima; and were discussing her charms one day in a boat in which were several natives who did not understand, as we thought, what we were saying, when all at once Samu, a half-caste (father African negro, mother Funafuti woman), struck

in with an appreciative smack of his lips, "Io, Solonaima palenti lubly, e palenti big leg!" I noticed the legs of the Funafuti girls more particularly after this, and found that few had finely developed thighs and calves like Solonaima.

Before leaving the island the king presented me with a finely plaited mat, and I gave him a kerosene lamp; he told me that I was a good woman and that he loved me, and I told him that he was the very nicest king I had ever met. He was quite pleased.

Opataia is the next to the Tupu in rank, and is the real ruler of the island, in that he is responsible to the Commissioner and is responsible for the enforcing of all laws. Not only is Opataia the magistrate appointed by the British Commissioner, but he is also the sub-chief chosen by the people; and the people have shown remarkably good sense in electing him. He is barely middle-aged, tall, grave, strong, clean, brave, clever, pious yet humble, and he wears a complete suit of white ducks on Sundays. Opataia is a model man, and is much thought of and respected by all who know him. He can spear or hook fish, row, climb a cocoa-nut tree, cultivate taro, make bonito hooks and sinnet, cook fish, make puleleti and lolo, and lasso a rat with any man on the island. He certainly makes a splendid sub-chief and will probably be Tupu some day. Affairs of state seem to weigh heavily on his mind, he is not so gay and frisky as are most of the others; and he has a good deal of work and anxiety as compared with



OPATAIA.

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most other men in Funafuti, for he is a deacon of the church as well as sub-chief and magistrate, so that he feels himself responsible for the spiritual as well as the moral and physical welfare of his people. Is there a dispute of any kind among the islanders? Opataia is appealed to, and his decision accepted. Does the white chief need help? Opataia gives it. Does the white woman need fish, or cocoa-nut, or a canoe? Opataia supplies it. Is the native pastor sick? Opataia takes the services. He is able to do, and has to do, pretty well everything; and his salary is not quite so large as that of the Tupu. On one occasion, when the islanders put in an exorbitantly high tender for the carriage of coal for our expedition, Opataia called a meeting of all the men, and rated them soundly for their greed, which he rightly called dishonesty, to their great amazement. Then in order to shame them, and also to set a good example, he donned a native petticoat and carried coals for the expedition for three days and refused remuneration; and he did more work in the time than any other man in Funafuti.

He was also an excellent sailor, and could keep his wits about him in the most trying circumstances on the water; he knew every patch of coral, every shallow, every deep spot in the lagoon, and every place on the reef where it was good to fish or safe to land; he knew the habits of all the animals on the island, and how best to catch them; he knew all the plants on every islet of the atoll, and just where to

find them, and what were their uses ; he could understand a little English, and whenever there was a stiff bit of rowing or hauling to do Opataia always stuck to it better than any other man.

There are spots on the sun, however, and Opataia has erred in committing excessive matrimony. Before the Christian era in Funafuti he had married, become the father of two daughters, and then got tired of his wife and sent her about her business. This was of course quite the understood thing in the old days. But he married again, and his second wife presented him with a son and a daughter ; and then she died, and he married again this time a tiny little woman with a Mongolian countenance, who now has three small sons, and still lives and rules over his household. She is very clever at all the island work of cooking, mat plaiting, fan and hat-making, is a good singer, and was extremely kind to me on every occasion.

Opataia's first wife, Fipi (Phœbe?), is a jolly, rackety old girl, covered from head to foot with lafa, looks old enough to be Opataia's mother, is very fond of practical jokes, but is very industrious for a Funafutian, and has two almost grown-up daughters. One of these is at the High School for native girls in Samoa, and the other is my botanical friend, Tavaū. Tavaū inherits her mother's jollity and her father's brains and powers of observation. Many a happy day have I spent with Tavaū collecting specimens for my botanical collection, and being coached up in all the



MY BOTANICAL FRIEND TAVAU.





uses of the various native plants, their haunts, and their time of flowering. When we first began collecting plants, she would sometimes bring me a twig of a plant I had not yet seen, and say hopefully, "Fuga (flower) bineby," and some time after she would triumphantly produce the first blossom of the season, and bear me off to see the plant that bore it; and she never failed to look among the vegetable refuse under the tree to find a last year's fruit, and would hunt up a young seedling of the plant too whenever possible.

She was the noisiest flirt on the island and the best shot with a cocoa-nut; our students had to dodge their smartest when Tavaū was on the war-path. She was one of the best singers on the island and the least gentle of all the girls. She was inclined to be jealous, and on one occasion sulked with me for four days—I never knew why. We had a sort of explanation; I upbraided her with loving me no more, and she nearly broke down in a fit of penitence, and we kissed and made friends amidst an admiring group of piccaninnies.

Opataia's eldest son, Tamatoa, is a dear little boy, aged seven, and very intelligent; he can climb a cocoa-nut tree like a squirrel, and twist off the huge nuts with apparent ease. Opataia's youngest daughter, Nemei, was one of my five piccaninnies, and is a gentle, docile little maid. Altogether Opataia's family is an extremely promising one.

As a deacon of the church Opataia was much cast down just as we left the island, because the white

missionary had lectured him on the untidiness of the church and the school, and had told him that Funafuti was less enlightened than any other island in the group. This was a great blow to Opataia, and with his usual promptitude he assembled the islanders, and told them that as soon as ever our expedition had left the island the people would have to drop fooling round generally, and would have to spend their evenings in school.

If the other islands of the group are more enlightened morally and spiritually than Funafuti, they must be far ahead of any civilized country I know of.

After all, Opataia's work is less arduous than it might be, for his authority is greatly strengthened by the vague terror that his people have of the supernatural powers of the missionary, and by the wholesome respect for law inspired by the British Commissioner and the big guns of the British war-ships.

So much for the two chief natives on the island. Now for the resident white man, the trader, an Irish-Australian, Mr. John O'Brien, or "Tiaki" (Jacky); as he is called by his children and the other islanders. The trader is a cheery old boy and most wonderfully energetic, although he must be over seventy years of age, and has been trading in the islands for nearly forty years. He thoroughly understands the people and speaks their language fluently, though his pronunciation is very unlike that of a native. He was most obliging and helpful to us, and was always willing to supply us with information about the people

The Trader  
(Mr. J. O'Brien).

SARAI.



PEKE.

TEONE.

JANEL.

THE TRADER, MR. J. O'BRIEN, AND HIS FAMILY.

DAY OF  
CALCULUS



and the island. He generally dresses like the natives, but adopts European dress, including a hat, whenever a ship comes in.

He was not the sort of man that we expected the trader to be: he was neither a low-down ruffian, nor a romantic, adorable scamp, like some novelists' creations; he was just a normal, decent fellow, with the average amount of truthfulness and honour usually met with among men of few opportunities. The natives respect him, and he respects their laws and customs, and is on the whole a peaceable, likable old man. One reason why the natives respect him is that he is able to do well the sort of work that they understand: he can swim, dive, row, or fish wonderfully well, and then, too, he is one of the chief links between them and the great unknown world whence the white people come.

He was not actively opposed to the mission, but did not attend church, or rather has not troubled to do so since the one-shilling fine for non-attendance has been abolished. Opataia has been much exercised in his mind about the ungodliness of his friend the trader, and since he cannot force his attendance at church has waited upon him as a deputation to remind him of his increasing years and the need to look after his soul. On these occasions the trader, with a godless twinkle in his eye, evades and makes excuses such as that he has no fit clothes to go to church in, etc.

The trader's wife, Sarai, is a tall, handsome native, but well on in years. Her family is a large one, and

her children are all good-looking, well grown, and intelligent ; but unluckily they are all of them delicate. They are proud of being half-caste whites, and at the same time are well up in all the native legends, games, and manufactures. O'Brien is fond of his wife and family, and says that although he would like for many reasons to return to Sydney, he cannot leave his children and Funafuti.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OUR FRIENDS AND RELATIONS

ORPHANS and strangers were we when we landed at Funafuti, but in a very short time we had numerous official friends and quite a formidable array of relatives.

Adoption is a very common and a very real thing in this island ; a man will adopt a child and lavish as much tenderness on it as if he were really its father. When I had had time and opportunity to make this observation, my own self-appointed brown relatives assumed a more serious character, and I understood, that as I had accepted the proffered relationship, we were indeed "all a same a one family," as my daughter put it.

My native mother, Tufaina, met me under circumstances already described. She was an aged and wise woman, who had the character of being one of the best hands at doctoring and at making all native goods such as titi, takai, fans, baskets, and wreaths, in addition to which she was an excellent cook from the native point of view. After securing her valuable assistance for our foreman's leg, I frequently visited her hut and cook-house, and conversed with her, in dumb show chiefly, for she never learned a word of English. Soon after I had formed the



habit of dropping into her cook-house, she told me that I was good, that she loved me, that she was my mother. I thanked her, said that I loved and respected her and was proud to be her daughter. Then I gave her six figs of trade tobacco, and she gave me a fan of her own making, and the compact was sealed. My mother had a beautiful big hole in the lobe of each ear, and found it a very handy pocket for her briar pipe when she was not smoking or lending it. She neatly twisted the long loop of lobe twice or thrice round the stem of the pipe, and there it was both safe and handy. Tufaina was small, like most of the Funafuti women, but wiry and strong, though she was lame from some injury to her hip, and needed a staff when walking; she consequently walked little, preferring to sit tailor-wise on the floor of her hut, where she could be very busy with eyes, ears, and fingers at one and the same time. She had been a handsome girl, and was a striking old woman, with regular features, aquiline nose, large, dark eyes, and black wavy hair, with only an occasional streak of grey in it, which she wore hanging loose on her shoulders. She possessed all her teeth, though they were blunt and yellow from age. How old she was I could never find out, but concluded that she was probably somewhere between forty-five and eighty. She had a numerous family of children, and adopted children, of grandchildren and great grandchildren; but as she, her children and grandchildren were probably married at the early age of fifteen, she might easily have been a great grandmother before fifty.

It struck me as a curious fact that no one in Funafuti knew his own, or another person's age. I once asked a young mother how old her baby was, and she could not tell me, but turned to the other women and held an animated discussion with them with much counting of fingers; she finally told me that her baby was "ono masina" (six months). After hearing that a young mother did not know the age of her first baby, you will not be astonished to hear that a husband doesn't know his wife's age, or a brother his sister's.

I usually called in at my mother's hut every day, but when I was obliged to pass by without stopping I would call out, "Talofa toku matua" (My love to you, my mother), and she usually answered, "Aue! Talofa" (Alas! My love to you). The trader told me that Tufaina had been a great dancer and singer in her young days, those good old days, which he was always regretting, when Funafutians could dance on their feet, when "free love" was the fashion, and when tattoo was compulsory.

By the way, my mother was tattooed; but I never dreamed of insulting her by mentioning it, for she was a devout church-member and looked upon her tattoo as a personal disgrace, although she had been obliged to receive it in pre-Christian days. She was also one of the very few natives free from skin diseases, so that I could give her my arm in walking or kiss her forehead without any creepy forebodings.

Kissing is not the fashionable salute in Funafuti,

but the English custom of hand-shaking is coming in. Nose-pressing is the native custom of salutation when a native goes away, or comes back after a long absence, and it is not a pretty form of salutation. Two noses are flattened one against the other, and the breath is expelled, at the moment of nose-flattening, in a vigorous howl.

My mother was a very good Christian from the native pastor's point of view ; she went to church regularly, always had evening prayers in her hut, subscribed money and mats for the mission, and gave liberally of food for the support of the pastor and his hungry family. The women of her end of the village always assembled in her hut for church work (plaiting mats for the mission), and she always opened each little *séance* with prayer. She was a well-to-do woman, her hut was large and well built, and she had plenty of cocoa-nut land.

She was a good Christian from my point of view too, for she was always cheerful and industrious, by far the most industrious woman on the island, her hut was always clean, and it was always open to all those in trouble or disgrace. For instance, she housed a few of her grandchildren, two motherless girls, a divorced woman and her child, and an illegitimate child and its fifteen-year-old mother. I could not see that she made any difference between these last and the others. Was this a remnant of the old heathen indifference to sexual immorality, or had she read and understood that word, "Let him that is without sin among you," etc. ? She always read her Bible every

day. Several photographs were taken of Tufaina, but unfortunately they were all spoiled.

Naina, my native daughter, was named after the city of Nain, and was the only daughter of Tili, the ex-favourite of the king. Her real mother died three months before I landed on the island, and Naina confided to me that Elisapeta (her mother) was good, had been dead three moons, and that she, Naina, "palenti kli." Of course I was sympathetic, and then Naina suggested that I should be her mother, and I willingly adopted the pretty, taking little maid. From that day Naina was my shadow, fetching and carrying for me, supplying me with fish and cocoa-nut, attending me at my bath, in fact showing me every attention in her power, even choosing to carry on her flirtations where I could be witness to her skill. She was somewhere about thirteen years of age, the trader thought, was in the top class in school, and was ambitious to be chosen as a pupil for the High School at Apia. She had a huge patch of lafa (ringworm) on one cheek when I adopted her, but that was soon cured; and she really tried to obey me about not washing herself or her clothes in the common bathing pool, so I hope she will not take the infection again. She was very quick at picking up English, and very soon I could trust her with messages to the other islanders. She got into a sad scrape while I was on the island, and was fetched up before the court and fined one shilling, for appearing in public without a lava-lava on. It was this way; she and another child of the

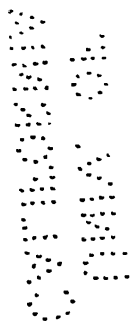
same age were bathing in the lagoon, when they saw the boats coming in, and as their huts were only about ten yards from the shore, they tore up to them, carrying their lava-lavas in their hands. A man saw them, and reported them to Opataia. Naina was furious about this disgrace, and when I questioned her about it, her eyes flashed and she raved out, "Ielamia bad man! Me die, me no sepeeka Ielamia!" I sympathized with this lapse to savagery, for the girl had thought the coast clear when she made that eventful trip across the sand, and the Funafuti Peeping Tom was so far off that he must have guessed rather than seen that she wore no lava-lava. Naina possessed a geography book, and this she frequently carried about with her. She pretended to learn up her lesson for the morrow at all sorts of unpropitious times; whenever she set to work seriously to learn it she fell asleep, and I was never sorry to see the geography expression fade out of her face as she gradually sank into a peaceful slumber. The climate of Funafuti is not conducive to exertion, mental exertion least of all. Naina never went to sleep though when there was a sing-sing on, she was always in the front row of the choir, and had a full rich voice of great power and sweetness.

She was very much amused the first time she saw me trying to clean fish. I was sitting on the ocean reef close to a pool of sea-water, and working very hard, with a blunt table knife, at cutting off the head of a fish. She watched me for some time, laughing at me as usual, till I tried to justify my helplessness



NAINA AND SOLONAIMA.

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by explaining to her that I hadn't a knife sharp enough to cut butter with. She didn't understand, but held out her hand and said "kivi," and I gave her the fish, and offered her the knife, which she scornfully refused; then with one bite of her magnificent teeth she severed the head of that fish, ripped open its body and disembowelled it with two dexterous twists of her forefinger, snatched up a fragment of cocoa-nut shell that was lying close by, and in a few seconds had scaled the fish perfectly. It was done in less time than it takes to write about it. I was sorry that I had ever cultivated a prejudice against food that had been in someone else's mouth, for it certainly was a very quick and easy method of cleaning fish—but then civilized teeth could not do the trick.

I am bound to admit that although Naina was only about thirteen years of age, she was an accomplished little flirt; she chose as her knight during our stay on the island a tall, good-looking student of our party, and her attentions to him were marked and unmistakable. She took him presents of drinking cocoa-nut and fish, and always prepared a fresh wreath of scented flowers for him every day, to ornament a disreputable old felt hat that he prided himself on wearing. He was a fearful tease, and I have seen Naina speechless with rage when he accepted a wreath from another girl, and placed it with hers on his hat. This breach of Funafuti etiquette on his part was conducive to ill-feeling, and Naina would tell me sulkily, "Pulu no good,



me no sepeeka Pulu," but in a few hours she would have forgiven him, and be willing to make friends.

Naina was an idle little puss, and I thought it part of my motherly duty to lecture her about her idleness on one occasion; at first she only laughed and said, "Me no savey work, me little girl," and when she saw this did not convince me, she looked defiant and said, "Me no work, my fader palenti lovee me." This was enough for me, and I never again attempted to mar her life of ease, except on one occasion, when I noticed she had a large hole in her tiputa. I showed her how to put on a patch, fixed it and tacked it, and she was very much pleased and interested while I was working; but as soon as I made her take the needle, and told her to sew the patch down, a look of unutterable boredom came over her. She sighed heavily all through the progress of that patch, but I made her finish it. When it was finished she took a long sleep of genuine weariness at my feet. I felt remorseful as I watched her there, and resolved not to trouble her by cultivating in her a conscience on the matter of mending clothes. After all, why should one consider rag-mending such a sterling virtue? When she awoke I maliciously suggested another patch, but she looked at me pathetically and said, "Bine-by," so "Bine-by" I let it remain. Happy little Naina!

My daughter was quite in the fashion in not mending worn or torn garments. There was only one woman on the island whom I ever saw mending clothes, and she was a cripple, paralyzed from her

waist downwards; she could not therefore spend a great part of her time pleasantly running about chaffing and gossiping as the other women did, and she was bound to put in her waking time at something, so she plaited hats and mats, and made and mended the garments of her family. On islands where there are married white missionaries the people are more in the habit of wearing European clothes, and keep them very tidily mended. I was struck with the neat, smooth patches to be seen on the seats of the trousers which the Nuié boys wore with such evident pride, and Mrs. Lawes (wife of the resident white missionary in Nuié) told me that the perfect fit of the patches was due to the fact that the patches were applied while the garment was being worn. A man who had worn his way through the seat of his trousers would lie face downwards (out in the street by preference), and a friend would cut, fit, fix, and sew on the patch; and those patches fitted the garment and the man admirably! Men make their own garments and patch those of their friends too in Nuié.

To return to my Funafuti relatives. I adopted by degrees five little girl piccaninnies—Pole, Semanua, So-So, Taatava, and Nemei. They often accompanied me when I paid calls in the village, or when Tavaū and I went collecting flowers they would carry my basket or umbrella, collect cocoa-nut husks and leaves for me when I was cooking, and run messages; in return for which I would give them biscuit *kaikai*, “lo-le” (Australian word “lolly”),

illustrated papers, or new print for clothes. The eldest of these children could not have been more than ten, and the youngest was probably about six years of age; but they could all read and write, cook in the native fashion, make peka and plait teano, and they could sing very well indeed. They would always come when I was cooking bread in the camp oven, because I had to sit in my cook-house to keep up the fire and put fresh glowing embers on the lid of the oven, and they liked helping to do this with native tongs that they ripped off a palm petiole with their strong white teeth; and in the intervals between attending to the fire they would sing songs to me, and sing them quite as well as the grown-ups did too. It was always an institution with them on these occasions that I should sing "The Farmyard" nursery rhyme to them; they took huge delight in the baa-baaing of the sheep, the clucking of the hens, and the grunting of the pigs.

So much for my relatives. My friends included all the women on the island, but Peke, the trader's handsome daughter, Solonaima, and Tavaū were the chief. These have been mentioned elsewhere, and so I will pass on to my husband's friends.

It is a custom in Funafuti, when any strange man arrives, for one of the natives to appropriate him as a special or official friend, by going up to him and saying, "Will you be my friend?" If you accept—and it is bad form to refuse—your friend waits on you, works for you, and presents you from time to



THE ISLAND BEAUTY SOLONAIMA.

75 1000  
at 1000

time with food, clothes, or curios. You must not insult him by offering payment for work or goods; friends cannot buy and sell with each other; you must wait a decent time for manners' sake after any service or present, and then make ample compensation. There were friends and friends, of course. Some really felt hurt if you tipped them; others liked to wait awhile, so as to look disinterested; while stray ones were greedy, and wanted immediate presents far exceeding the value of their service or gift. Taking it all round, the custom is as satisfactory as it is pretty; but like other good customs, it is open to abuse. Three of my husband's friends, for he had five instead of the orthodox one, were splendid fellows, being no less personages than Opataia, and Tili, and Tanei, one of the trader's numerous sons. These men always tried to give more than equivalents for favours received. Opataia has been described already. Tili, the father of my adopted daughter, was a strong, well-built man, of very courteous bearing, easy and dignified. He was the happy possessor of much land, both in taro gardens and cocoa-nut groves, and his hut was the only one in the village, except the trader's, that possessed a boarded floor. Tanei was the handsomest man in the island, and was very nearly white; but could speak very little English, although he had been cook for a year on board an English trading vessel. He was very proud of having been to the Gilbert Islands; it is a very plucky thing for an Ellice islander to go to the Gilberts, for these

peaceful, harmless people have a great horror of their bloodthirsty neighbours in the Line Islands. Tanei had been twice married. His first wife had been too noisy, he told me. "Me no likee this woman," said he; so he calmly sent her back to Niutao, her native island, and married an extremely pretty little woman, who looks like a child herself, although she is the mother of four children. He was a member of the church and a sidesman, with pole of office, and I never understood how it was that he could shunt his wife in that summary way, and yet be a pillar of the church, just like a civilized white man! But perhaps he turned pious after resuiting himself with a wife. He was reticent on this subject. I told him that now he was under English rule he would not be able to change wives in that free-and-easy fashion, and he seemed thoughtful, probably considering that the English law was weak on this subject; but like a wise man he said nothing.

The other two friends were not so satisfactory as Opataia, Tili, and Tanei. They were, in fact, distinctly self-seeking. One came and asked for a 400-gallon tank, a kerosene lamp, a tin of kerosene, all our knives, forks, spoons, dishes, towels; in fact, he wanted us to give him everything we possessed when we left the island. We put him down gently but firmly. The other fellow was a dreadful old creature, hungry-eyed, insatiable, and an irrepressible beggar. He would come to our hut just at meal-times, and amuse himself by expectorating noisily and lavishly

all over the floor. I surprised him by losing my temper with him one day, and he left hurriedly. He was so fearfully greedy that he would eat anything and any quantity that was given him. On one occasion the drill men gave him the pot of porridge that had been made for their breakfasts and burnt; he sat down and rapidly ate the whole batch, and we had rest from him for about a fortnight afterwards. The first time he came to see me he sat down and talked to me for half an hour, and I failed to understand anything he said; then he pointed at me and crowed, and I thought perhaps he wanted to know if I would like a fowl. So I nodded, and off he trotted, and shortly after he returned with a hen in one hand and an egg in the other, and pointed first to the hen, then to the egg, to make me understand that she was responsible for its existence. I took the hen and the egg and said "Faafatai" (Thank you) patiently, and he squatted on the floor of my hut expectorating and expectant. I understood the waiting attitude at once, but gave him nothing. Then he began talking again, but I shook my head and said, "No savey." Then he pointed to his mouth and then to mine, but I still "no savey-ed"; and then, finding me so obtuse, he pressed his stomach affectionately and then pointed at mine. This was too realistic, and I hastily presented him with a basket of yams, and said, "Alu ese," and he went.

The two unsatisfactory friends were not Funafutians; they were Samoans resident in Funafuti.



## CHAPTER XII.

### TATTOO

THE ignorant natives of Funafuti called tattoo "tau" (pronounced "tah-oo" very rapidly). I didn't correct them.

My husband had promised to take all the tattoo patterns he could get on the island, and send them home to a learned man in the learned city of Oxford. He was very keen about this till we got to Funafuti, but then he found that among the fair sex only the very old, skinny natives were tattooed; so he said he really hadn't time to do everything, and besides he said he was naturally shy about strange ladies, and on the whole he thought it would be more correct if I took the women's tattoo, and left him just to tackle the men. Afterwards he found he was too busy to tackle the only old man who was tattooed, and who was doubly interesting as being the host for a fine colony of Tokelau ringworm (lafa).

In my ignorant zeal in the cause of science I undertook to copy the tau. The trader told me there were only four old crones who were tattooed, and he also said that all the tattoo patterns were exactly alike, so that in former days one could tell a Funafuti

man or woman by the tau they bore. I felt that there were more than four remaining specimens of tattoo in the female form, but if you won't believe a trader in the South Seas, what are you to do? Anyhow, he introduced me to the "only four," and I visited them in turn, giving them reels of cotton and figs of tobacco as a recompense for sitting for their tau pictures. I *knew* those patterns wouldn't all be alike, and they weren't. The tattoo on the back and ribs from the waist up to the shoulder-blades was the same in every case, and one woman had that only; the other three had a considerable amount of decoration in addition to this, and these decorations were different on every woman and extremely complex. I found also that the women had lost a good deal of adipose tissue since they were tattooed, for their skins now hung in wrinkled folds, and the patterns had consequently run into each other considerably, so that the skin had to be stretched out bit by bit to discover the real hang of the pattern. I did not like doing this; it was distinctly nasty to have to handle warm moist skin that had not been too much subjected to the action of soap and water. The women didn't like it any more than I did, after the preliminary presentations were over; they soon got tired, and wanted to lie down or lean up against a post and smoke off their weariness; and besides, they thought I was irreligious and a bit of a fool too to want to have anything to do with tau.

I set to work, however, stretching out the skin,

drawing the pattern, measuring sizes and distances, and got through about two square inches of work in one afternoon, with intervals of rest for my subjects. They wanted a fearful lot of rest, and more than that, they seized upon the opportunity for making minute enquiries into my family history. It was kind of them to be so interested, but I was afraid my inadequate acquaintance with the language of Funafuti might be the cause of a few slight mistakes in the information they were trying so praiseworthily to collect.

After a few weeks of this method of trying to take the tau, I had a brilliant idea. I would lay tracing paper on the subjects, and take the patterns rapidly that way. Off I started cheerfully, with a nice little roll of tracing paper, intending to bag the entire collection of patterns that afternoon. But it wouldn't do. The skin and the tau were both so like that the pattern didn't show through the paper at all; and there was no way of stretching the skin and fastening the tracing paper down except with drawing pins, and the women objected to that. So I had to return to the old slow way of stretching the skin with one hand while measuring and drawing with the other. I finally succeeded in getting an accurate copy of the pattern common to all, which fortunately happened to be the simplest. The other patterns I regretfully passed. One woman had nearly half a square foot of pattern on her right shoulder, and it looked like an elaborate geometrical design executed by Kindergarten babies when their teacher's back was turned; another lady

had both shoulders covered with a fearful and wonderful work of the savage imagination.

When I had been trying for several weeks, with very little success, to secure these tattoo patterns, I made a discovery. It was this—the greatest part of the tattoo, and the most important, so they said, was covered up by the leaf-petticoat! I didn't get this part of the tattoo; the proud owners of it were shy, and somehow I couldn't work up sufficient curiosity to want to see it. But I thought about it. I also tried to collect information on the subject, but this was not easy, owing to the beautiful simplicity of the trader and the natives. The natives had been taught by the missionaries that the old heathen custom of tattooing is wicked, and so they were ashamed of it, and wouldn't "let on" about it any more than they could help. The trader held that tattooing is one of the beautiful and elevating old customs which the missionaries are unnecessarily hard on. He said that, before the missionaries came, every girl had to be tattooed; that the tattooing was done by the public tattooer—a man, of course; that the operation was painful, and took several weeks; and that there used to be long-drawn-out feasts and orgies connected with this public method of announcing that a girl had reached a marriageable age. It seems that the pioneer missionaries were horrified at the indelicacy of the whole proceeding, and made a church rule to the effect that tattooing was forbidden to Christians, and that anyone who submitted to this beautiful old heathen custom would straightway be degraded from

church membership. Very narrow and bigoted of the pioneer missionaries, say the high-toned, disinterested traders. What a pity it is that we cannot all go and find out for ourselves the truth of all the statements made against missionaries. At any rate, it would be wise to reserve our condemnation until we have heard the facts of the case from all parties concerned.

There is no doubt that the native pastors, who enforce the church rules in these far-away groups, do make ludicrous mistakes by their inability to distinguish between the letter and the spirit of the law. The following anecdote, told me by the trader, illustrates this fact; and it also goes to prove how necessary it is to have a white missionary resident in the group as overseer of the native pastors:—

“A youth and a maiden wished to enter the holy estate of matrimony, and applied to his sable reverence to unite them according to the Christian law and custom. His reverence ruled that it was against the law to marry a church member to one who was not a church member; and in this case the girl had been admitted to membership and the boy had not. This was a great blow to the amorous young couple, and they racked their brains to find a way out of the difficulty. At last, with the childishness of their race, they agreed that as the youth had been unable to obtain his ticket of membership from the pastor, the girl had better do something to forfeit hers, so that they, being on the same plane of unworthiness, might be eligible for each other. They consulted together as to what crime the girl

was to commit, and decided that she should have two or three tiny spots tattooed on the back of her hand. This was done, and the fact duly reported to his reverence, who solemnly excommunicated the girl for her grievous sin, and then married her to the man of her choice, there being now no ecclesiastical bar to their union.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### OTHER MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

THE much-vexed question as to what is essentially man's work, or woman's work, seems never to have been raised in this ideal little community.

In the first place both the men and women of Funafuti are far too sensible to do a stroke more work than is actually necessary to provide food, clothes, and shelter; and these are easily obtained. Very little work is ever done in order to procure luxuries; a native's best-loved luxury is rest.

Then both men and women do what they *can* of the work that has to be done; a woman can, and occasionally does, do almost every kind of work that has to be done in the island. I never saw a woman take part in the deep-sea fishing outside the lagoon, perhaps because this entails occasional severe exertion, such as rowing against wind and tide. I never saw a woman *spear* fish; but women fish from the shore and from canoes constantly, whenever fish is wanted for a meal.

The heaviest of the building work, such as cutting, carrying, and placing posts and rafters, is done by the men; the women sometimes make the thatch, and hand up sinnet and thatch for the men to tie on.

Men generally do the planting and digging in the taro-gardens and cocoa-nut groves, but I have seen women helping in this work ; they nearly always help in gathering taro roots and leaves, and they do nearly all the manuring that is done in the gardens, which consists of plaiting wreaths of pukavai leaves to place round the roots. When the gardens needed enriching the men would go in boats to one of the islets where pukavai trees grow abundantly, gather a boat-load of leaves, bring them back to the main islet, and turn them over to the women, who plait them into wreaths and place them round the plants.

I could not find out that there was any feeling among men and women as to what was the correct thing in work for either, but I noticed that the men usually did the heavy work, although, when men were not available, the women did it cheerfully and as a matter of course. We always employed the men to carry boxes, coal, or wood, but I saw two or three women helping their husbands to bring in baskets of wood ; and some of the women will carry very heavy loads of cocoa-nuts. There seemed no general tendency among the men to make slaves of the women, but the women would volunteer to do any necessary work on occasions. There is, however, as I have said before, no need for anyone to work, as a rule, for more than two or three hours a day, and therefore very few people do so.

I never saw a woman climb a cocoa-nut tree ; when the men were away the women sent the small boys up the trees to twist off the nuts ; the women would



collect them and carry home the load. The young girls can run up trees as nimbly as the boys, but they think it an unseemly thing to do when they are big girls.

Cooking is done by both men and women; the men always cook the loads of fish they catch far from home, because it will not keep fresh even for a few hours unless it is cooked. I remarked to the trader that cooking did not seem to be specially women's work in the island, and he replied, "Lor bless ye, no, mum, the men can do it just as well as the women, and a good deal better too." Masculine prejudice again.

The women usually made the hats, mats, titi, takai, looked after the babies, helped in the cooking, fishing, gardening, and building, and the men did the deep-sea fishing, made hooks and lines, cut timber, made canoes, boxes, tuai (cocoa-nut grater), fish-traps, and kumete (wooden dishes), climbed cocoa-nut trees, and helped in the cooking and gardening. It seemed the custom for man or woman to do any piece of work that was needed, without questioning whether they ought to do it or not. Perhaps if they had to work as hard as white people do they would be a little more particular.

Although most of the heathen customs are abolished, it is still the rule for men to kill, cut up, and cook the turtle, but they let the women eat some of it now, which they did not in former days, so that the women are not likely to complain over this insult to their sex.

Men are not above waiting on the women either ; for instance, when the women were busy making mats at the king's order, the men cooked their food and brought it to them, and even helped to look after the babies so that the women could work without interruption.

The Funafuti babies don't want much looking after ; there is no elaborate system of bathing and dressing the precious darlings, and when they are not feeding they lie on a mat and sleep, and as soon as they can walk they toddle off with the older children, and give their parents no trouble except when they are hungry. They often are hungry, and there are no settled meal-times in the island ; people eat and drink whenever they feel hungry or thirsty so long as there is something handy to eat, and there is always cocoa-nut to be had for the fetching.

The daily housework consists of reefing up and letting down mosquito screens ; the mats are turned out and the hut tidied once a week. Both men and women wash clothes, but the weekly wash is a small matter, and the process is simple. Each person probably needs a clean lava-lava once a week, and the way to wash it is to take a small piece of soap (soap is a shilling a bar here) into the bathing pool with the lava-lava ; after a few rubs and a rinse, you hang it on a palm leaf to dry, and lie down to smoke or rest till it is ready. No starching or ironing is done here, but the blue-bag has been introduced by the trader, and is used as a dye ; the natives very much affect pale blue garments.

The women do not take any apparent part in the government; but on public occasions they are in evidence, and sit in the circle that is formed round an orator, and join in the applause or derision. I once heard a woman make a speech before the king, sub-chief, and parliament; but that brings me to the custom of making presents.

Twice during my stay on the island there was a public presentation of mats: the first was to the native pastor, the second to myself. I saw the whole ceremony from start to finish, and found it most interesting.

To begin with, the conch was blown to summon all the chief men; the king then proposed that the women should be asked to make mats as a present to the native pastor, who was expecting to go away for a holiday. As debating is exhausting work, the men always carry with them to the court-hut a small basket of provisions wherewith to sustain themselves while others are speechifying. There was a good deal of speechifying on this occasion, as the whole of the men did not agree with the idea of making this present; they thought the native pastor was sufficiently well paid for his services, and they said so. After all the men had talked themselves amiable, they decided that the women should be told that the king wished them to make these mats. Then came the women's turn to chatter and discuss. They didn't talk more than the men did (that was scarcely possible), but they *seemed* to do a lot more, because theirs was a kind of from hut-to-hut discussion, and

the arguments ran high. Only the very extra pious women were keen about making the mats; most of the women objected to the fortnight's spurt of hard work that it entailed. They finally consented to make the mats, and determined to get as much excitement out of it as possible, to which end they arranged that there should be a race between the women of the north and the women of the south end of the village.

Each set of women was to undertake five mats. Sarai, wife of the trader, took the leadership of the women of the south end; Tufaina took the leadership of the women of the north end, and each set worked all day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; not all the workers at once, but about eight at a time, and when one woman got tired another took her place. Every day I paid a visit either to Sarai or Tufaina to see how the work was getting on, and to note how church-workers in Funafuti conducted their meetings. Each woman had a tabola (palm-leaf basket) of provisions by her, and the work was agreeably diversified by eating, drinking, smoking, chattering, and singing.

The native pastor is trying to teach the women that smoking is a habit that should be restricted to men, but the women go on smoking; only the school-girls and very young married women pretend to be horrified at the idea of a woman smoking.

About a fortnight after the commencement of the mat-plaiting bee there was great excitement at the south end of the village, and I saw Lui (one of Sarai's band), dressed in fresh green wreaths, carrying

a long pole to the top of which were tied a few leaves and feathers, dancing, singing, shouting, and waving the pole, followed by half the village. She danced up to Tufaina's hut, where a few of the north end women were working, flourished her pole, and said a few words, which seemed to please the crowd behind her more than the women whom she addressed.

When I could get near enough to make enquiries, I found that this was an old custom, and that it meant that the women at the south end of the village had won the race in the mat-plaiting, that their mats were finished, and that Lui had been the first among them to finish her mat. This gave her the right and privilege of parading the street with a pole, chaffing the slower women, and finally of leading the revels at the presentation.

When all the mats were finished a day was fixed for the presentation, and the native pastor was notified of the honour in store for him. He had known about it all along, of course; those natives could not keep such a secret to save their lives; but it was the correct thing for the honoured one to appear sublimely unconscious of what was going forward, and the native pastor did his duty in this matter wonderfully well.

Tufaina sent for me early on the day of presentation, and I found all the women belonging to the north end of the village assembled in her hut when I arrived at 9 a.m. They all wore native costumes, had huge tabola (baskets) and kumete (dishes) of food by them, and all were nimbly plaiting wreaths

of flowers, creepers, and leaves, with which to decorate themselves.

As soon as I arrived my mother made a sign with her hand, and every eye was closed while she offered up a short prayer, in which, as usual, the word "faa-fatai" (thanks) took a prominent part. When the prayer was over we all fell to eating, chattering, and wreath-making, and this went on till a woman pointed skyward to show that the sun was overhead. Then all jumped up, put their wreaths on, seized the mats which were hung up to the rafters, and all went up in a body to the open space in the centre of the village, where were already assembled the women from the south end of the village with their mats.

Then the mats were unrolled and held up for general inspection and criticism, and they got it too. After much chattering, chaffing, and laughter, the mats were rolled up again, ten women took one mat each and marched across the space to the court-hut, where all the men had been feeding, talking, and waiting since 9 a.m. The mats were once more unrolled and spread out for the men to quiz and comment on, and some very pointed remarks flew round, especially when an extra small mat was unrolled. The woman who made the small mat was thoroughly well roasted over it, but didn't seem to care in the least about all the adverse criticism her idleness and meanness evoked.

When all the mats had been displayed the king, Opataia, and a few other men made speeches of thanks to the women, and then Salota (an elderly

widow) was called on to reply. She did not enter the hut to do this, but lolled up against the side, looking in waggishly at the men, and made an animated little speech which elicited roars of laughter from both men and women.

Next came another meal, after which men and women formed themselves into a solid block, the front row of which carried the mats over their heads like awnings. Lui, dressed almost entirely in wreaths of a leafless creeper called fetai, led the way; and the block moved solidly and very slowly on towards the pastor's hut, singing as they went, and stopping after every song to laugh and talk and rest, and decide what the next song was to be.

It took them an hour by the clock to walk from the court-house to the pastor's hut, a distance of about fifty yards!

The pastor was in his hut, dressed in his best, with his family and most intimate friends near him, and a group of his older pupils very much dressed waiting near, with a heap of drinking-nuts, taro, and pig beside them.

The procession stopped at a distance of about twenty yards from the pastor's hut, and Lui took a mat, rolled it up, poised it gracefully above her head, and advanced singing and dancing very prettily towards the hut; when she was half-way there a girl from the group of pupils picked up two nuts, and went smiling out to meet her. They went through a few amusing antics, dancing round and pretending not to see each other for a while, then

they exchanged presents, the pupil danced up with the mat, and spread it out before the pastor's hut, and Lui danced back to the block of people. This went on for an hour, each mat being presented and received by a different woman or boy, with a different dance and song, the antics also being varied, such as occurred to the dancers on the spur of the moment. I began to fear the presentation would go on all day, and it was nearly 3 p.m. before the last mat was received. The people were all tired, and seemed very glad to squat down near the pastor's hut in order to hear the speeches. The king was not present during this part of the proceedings, and so Opataia and Siali made the speeches, nice sugary speeches, exactly the sort of speech that white people make when giving a testimonial to a fellow-creature. The pastor, too, was just like a white brother in the same trying circumstances, very diffident, bashful, halting in his speech; in fact, showing unmistakably that he wished his friends to see how deeply their kindness had affected him.

When the speechifying was all over, the people moved off a few yards and had another feast, this time a roast pig presented by the people to the pastor, and re-presented by him to the people. As I had had nothing to eat since breakfast, for fear of missing any of the show, and it was now nearly four o'clock, I was thankful for a green cocoa-nut offered me by the pastor, and sat down among the people to devour it.

After this there was a general holiday for a week ;



for the natives always recruited their strength by a good long rest after a spurt of work of this kind.

Exactly the same process was gone through on the day when the women presented me with six mats, except that I only had five minutes' notice of the event, and so had no time to dress up or to prepare return presents. However, I made up for these omissions next day in a manner that seemed entirely satisfactory to the natives.

Famerea, Tanai's pretty little wife, was the chief woman on this occasion, and very charming she looked as she ran and danced and sang merrily while she brought the mats, and laid them at my feet. As I had had such short notice I had not arranged to have friends receive my present, and therefore was obliged to take them myself in the English style, conscious all the time that the English method was far inferior to the Funafuti one in grace, poetry, and artistic effect.

The presentation was very hurried this time, only lasting an hour, because my husband said he could not stay longer, and Opataia consequently made the people hurry, and I fear it somewhat spoiled their pleasure.

When all the mats were spread out before me, Opataia rose and made a speech, which the trader interpreted in the following startling way: "He ses, mum, that it isn't the custom of the island to make presents to white people, but he ses, ses he, you's different. He ses you's been very good to all the people, so, ses he, they takes pity on you, ses he, and

gives you these mats. They've all worked, ses he, very hard to make these, ses he, and they are all very thankful to ye, ses he."

Had I not learned by this time that a trader's interpretation of a Funafuti speech is, to say the least of it, bald, I might have felt rasped, but I had learned this, and responded to the speech as I guessed it had been made, and not as it had been rendered by the trader.

I had been able to follow part of Opataia's speech myself, and gathered the rest of it from my friends and native daughter. The following is a short summary of it:—"The women of Funafuti and all the people greet you with love. They want to thank you for all your kindness to them, since you have been living among them. They will always love you, and mourn for you when you are gone, not only because you have given them many gifts, but because you have been among them, talked with them as friends, and cured them when they were sick. The women all felt sorry that they had nothing good enough to give you in return for what you have done for them. But, they said, we can plait mats, and we will all weave our love into a little bit of a mat, and give it to the foreign woman, and tell her it is not enough, but it is all that we have to give; and every time the woman looks at these mats when she is far away in Sydney, she will think of the love we bear her."

There are very few of the old heathen customs retained, they have all been discouraged by the

missionaries, and probably with very good reason ; but this old custom of dressing-up, dancing, feasting and singing, at the time of making a public presentation, is delightful in every way, and being quite harmless has been allowed to pass the stern scrutiny of the ecclesiastics.

Many of the old marriage customs had fallen into disuse before the advent of the missionaries, but since their arrival all marriages are celebrated in the Mission Church on an approved Christian plan. Since "education" has been the fashion in Funafuti, the youths prefer to write on paper a formal proposal, and the girls write a letter in reply ; but before this era youths paid attentions to damsels, and had to look out for an answer at a sing-sing. If a girl meant to encourage a lover she would throw him a scented wreath publicly ; if she didn't wish to be worried with his love-making she threw an unscented wreath.

In former days marriages were sometimes arranged long before the parties to the contract were of an age to give an opinion. For instance, two friends would arrange that the son of one should marry the daughter of the other, when the son was an infant, and the daughter only a probability. The betrothed children knew, as soon as they knew anything, that they would have to marry each other, and they did not always fall in with the arrangement. "In fact," said the trader, "this old-time custom bred a lot o' rows." When a boy was old enough to think about marriage, he might fancy another girl, and in the same way the girl might fancy another boy, and as the Funafuti

youths and maidens were not too meek, they found means of freeing themselves from distasteful engagements.

They could keep on postponing marriage until the king would order them to obey their parents by marrying each other. If it was the girl who objected, she usually had another boy in reserve, and when she saw she could not postpone marriage, she would go off into the bush with her lover, and stay away a night or two. The jilted man would in this case be so unmercifully chaffed that he would resign his claim, and the girl would be allowed to keep the man she preferred. Sometimes it was the boy who objected to his betrothed, and when he was ordered to marry, he would hide in the bush for days, until hunger or other mixed motives prompted him to return to the village, when he would promptly be fined. This would continue until the patience of the parents had worn out, and they would make other arrangements for the girl, and then the contumacious youth would be free also.

Now the youths and maidens select their own mates, although up to the present parents have the right to stop any marriage of which they do not approve. Probably now that the island is under British rule, the young people with obstinate parents will be obliged to wait until they are twenty-one years of age; this would be unusually late in life for a man or woman in Funafuti to marry, a girl of twenty-one would be reckoned among the "fafine taka" (old maids).

There are some excellent regulations made since the island has been christianized, which tend very much to the well-being of the pretty Funafuti damsels; one of these rules is that after sundown every person must be in his or her own hut. As the population is small, only about two hundred and seventy, as there are six policemen, and the island is only seven miles long by half a mile in its widest part, it is comparatively easy to see that these rules are enforced.

During the day the young people see a good deal of each other, and the bantering and chaff that flies about the island is very entertaining. The boys get the full benefit of the girls' opinion of them, especially when it is adverse; I have heard an unfortunate boy baited almost to madness by the rude personalities of two or three girls. The girls very much fancied the palagi (foreigners or heaven-bursters, from "papa," to burst, and "lagi," the heavens) boys of our party, and did not neglect to compare their Funafuti admirers with the white men, considerably to the disadvantage of the former. This caused some small amount of sulking; but it was wonderful how soon the boys recovered from the snubbings, a very small joke would set them laughing, apparently forgetful of the rough time they had just been having.

The method of flirtation between a Funafuti girl and a palagi boy is novel. The girl will present scented wreaths in token of friendship, make her hero presents of cocoa-nuts, and hang round where he is working, alternately chaffing and petting him.

She will give him a hearty resounding thump on the back when she passes him close enough, or hurl a cocoa-nut at his head if she sees him in the distance. She will languish at him before any number of on-lookers, and lisp quite audibly, "Me palenti lovee oo!" The white men enjoyed themselves tremendously in thus being adored by the prettiest girls on the island.

The girls would stand no nonsense though, and occasionally a flash of the savage came out; for instance, I saw a girl (who till then had struck me as being one of the sweetest and gentlest little pussies imaginable), deliberately slash round with a large knife, and cut open the leg of a native boy who had tweaked a lock of her hair in passing. She was sauntering along with an armful of palm leaves, when she felt the slight pull; she glowered instantly and struck out recklessly with the knife almost before looking round to see who it was.

The old-time marriage ceremony was very simple. On the wedding day the happy man, accompanied by his friend, called casually on his mother-in-law-elect with a present of cocoa-nuts. Later on in the day he called again by himself, and his mother-in-law-elect placed a mat on the floor and he and his bride sat down on it side by side for a short time. This constituted a marriage, and the bridegroom would saunter away and turn up that night and henceforth at his mother-in-law's hut. It is the custom for a daughter and her husband to live with her mother, until the combined families become too large for the hut, when they are obliged to separate.

The feasting in connection with a marriage was its chief feature; the families of the contracting parties were expected to keep open house for a week, and to supply food for all and every who chose to drop in, and most people chose to drop in; and a Funafuti appetite is one to reckon with.

Then again an extensive trousseau had to be prepared, for it was the custom for the bride to be dressed in new clothes, and sent up to the hut of her husband's people; it was etiquette for the husband's people to relieve her of her new clothes, and send her back with others if possible finer than those they took from her, and the girl would be sent backwards and forwards all day long, till she was "fairly beat," the trader said.

Although the wedding breakfast a week long, free to all comers, and the number of clothes to be provided must have been a strain on the finances of the two families, yet after all getting married was cheap in Funafuti as compared with getting married in Europe. There was no house to find, no furniture or house-linen to buy; the young couple lived with the bride's mother for some time, and even when they finally had to set up for themselves they needed only a hut, a few mats, a mosquito screen, and the few cooking utensils mentioned in another chapter.

A Funafuti woman, however wealthy her husband might be in cocoa-nut land, would have no servants, but would do her own work, which is not at all likely to overtire her.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### AMUSEMENTS

THE trader constantly expatiated on the good old times when he first came to the island, when the people held feasts, public games, dances, and such-like pleasures, most of which had been put down by the missionaries. He said things were much more lively in those days. I expect they were!

In those grand old times European clothes were unknown, men and women dressed in the native leaf petticoat; both wore their hair long, and decorated their heads, necks, and arms with garlands of flowers; and all were tattooed. The king had more power, and kept up a little more ceremony in those days too; for instance, on state occasions he used to sit inside an enclosure made of ornamental mats; now he sits on a mat like any other man; and the patterns on his state mats, which in the old days were forbidden to common folks, are now woven into all the fine fala-mats made by the women.

It was difficult to work out anything like a satisfactory account of "former days"; the trader invariably praised them, but details did not always agree. The men and women were stronger and



handsomer, the climate was better, life was pleasanter, the people were less grasping—in fact, everything was better in the days when he was young.

In the old times kite-flying used to be a great feature in all the public games on the island, and this game is mentioned in many of their stories; but there was no exhibition of kite-flying during our stay on the island.

Wrestling also figured largely at all the old heathen feasts, and a wrestling match is generally arranged, even now, by the trader, whenever Europeans visit the island, which is, of course, very seldom.

Surf-riding is still supposed to be a great delight with the natives; but either the sea was not favourable, or our expedition furnished the natives with so much amusement that they could dispense with surf-riding for a while: whatever the cause we never saw any surf-riding, and I never even saw a surf-board. The ocean reef is rather dangerous, and the people seldom swam there, except when there was a surf-riding display, or when the ocean was so calm that the men could dive off the ocean edge of the reef for the growing corals. They did this several times while we were there, and chopped off and swam up with large pieces of coral, which they gave to our workmen.

My daughter, Naina, and my botanical friend, Tavaū, once induced me to go into the surf with them, on the ocean reef. They walked out on the long, flat platform, about half-way across, then stood still with legs firmly planted and rather wide apart,

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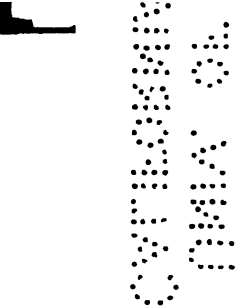
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and waited till a wave rolled in, they then jumped on it, turned deftly over, and were smoothly carried a long way shoreward. They were not carried back by the suck-out of the wave, and it looked so easy that I too ventured. I got as far as being washed up by a wave, but I couldn't get out of that wave; when it withdrew it quietly but firmly insisted on carrying me with it, to the uproarious merriment of my daughter and friend, who never held out so much as a finger to help me. Just as I was feeling too tired to try any more, and had begun to wonder whether I should be drowned or eaten by a shark, I passed close to a projecting bit of rock, and with some difficulty managed to clutch it and hold on until the wave had finished drawing. Then in between that and the next wave I floundered and ran as hard as I could on the sharp and jagged rock of the platform, back to the shore. It was a fairly hot race between me and the next wave, and I was spent, and scratched and bruised too, before I reached the shore, and I was too grateful to find myself there to wish to go back again; though my daughter did her best by laughing and jeering at me to make me go in again, I summoned up enough moral courage to refuse.

The natives all swim like fishes, and dive marvelously too, always feet first. Whenever we happened to be in a boat, if a native saw a giant clam, he would instantly dive over after it, perhaps in twenty or thirty feet of water, tear it off the rock, and swim up with it. The huge juicy mollusc was promptly devoured, and the shells kept to sell as curios.

The children taught themselves to swim ; tiny little mites not two years old would toddle in after their bigger brothers and sisters, and they would splash round until they could swim somehow. I often saw a big child throw in a tiny one who couldn't swim, and the mite would splutter, and gasp, and choke, but always managed to get out of the difficulty without help ; and it never seemed to resent the rough treatment.


I always took from half a dozen to a score of children down to the lagoon with me when I went to bathe, and we put in a very merry time. The children would shout at me "Fonu" (turtle), and then off they would go and plunge into the lagoon, bunching themselves up to look as like a turtle as possible, and paddling along in the funniest way, with their noses just out of the water, and their arms moving rhythmically in imitation of flippers.

Then there would be another shout of "Magu" (shark) this time, and down all the youngsters would go under water, swimming along rapidly and steadily, with only the bent elbow of one arm for the fin showing above water. Then we should be called into a ring, the children standing up to their necks in water, and there would be a spouting competition. The children had several methods of working their hands on the surface of the water so as to spout up a large quantity of water, and they could aim well too, and got tremendously merry over aiming at me and each other, and dodging their rivals at the same time. It was warm work dodging half a dozen

spouts, but after getting one or two swift and well-aimed ones in my eye, I found that I could work up enough energy to avoid the rest. I never laughed so much in my life as I did in the lagoon with these frisky, mischievous piccaninnies. Then they always insisted on a performance from me, and I would swim about half a dozen strokes in a frog-like fashion, and they would caper and yell with delight, and shout out criticisms, which resolved themselves into something like this, "Te fafine (the woman) koko (swims) all-a-same maniki" (monkey). The small people have never seen a real monkey, by the way, but have frequently seen pictures of this agile and beautiful animal.

Then we would wind up with a race, and off all the children would go, swimming up against each other, pushing against and trying to swamp those that seemed likely to win; but they always came out of the fray amiably.

Other games were almost as amusing, if not quite so exciting as kite-flying, swimming and diving. Top-spinning, aforesaid very commonly a man's game, is now rarely indulged in. Tanei presented me with a native top (vaka); it was a simple affair, just two pieces of cocoa-nut shell, slipped one inside the other, smoothed round the rim, and stuck together with pitch, the centre of the convex side being supplied with a neat little peg, a tiny spiral shell about one quarter inch long, also stuck on with pitch. The cord for the top was a rough piece of native sinnet rather more than a yard long. We could not imagine how this cord was ever going to be wound round

the shallow saucer-like top; but Tanei twisted it tightly round the top, curving it alternately over and below the rim, so as to make a pattern like this  round the rim; he then took it in his right hand with the loose end twisted on to his little finger, gave a quick inward and then outward jerk, and let the top fly; it landed on a board he had placed ready, and spun rapidly for at least five minutes. We tried frequently to spin that top, but came to the conclusion that it would only spin for a native.

There was a game very like draughts much in vogue among the natives. My native mother possessed a board roughly cut out of kanäva wood with alternate chequers chipped out. The two sets of men used in the game were merely a handful of flattish fragments of drift pumice, which is very plentiful all over the atoll, and another handful of white shells. Pumice against shells. The rules of the game are nearly, but not quite, as in draughts, and it is evidently meant for draughts.

I introduced the game of halma, and taught Peke to play. She learned the game rapidly, and when she and I were playing we generally had an interested audience who would make intelligent remarks, and occasionally suggest moves, or point out a move we missed seeing. Peke is now the proud possessor of my halma board.

The children's games were interesting and were generally played roughly, and with a vast amount of noisy shrieks and laughter. One game they

greatly favoured was moulding, very realistically, the figure of a woman in the sand ; when it was finished they would lie down by it, gabble off some gibberish, and then jump up and run away, leaving the figure to be washed out by the tide. Like all children they took pleasure in the mischievous fun of destroying each other's handiwork, and there was usually a great scrimmage in attempting to kick the sand figures out of shape.

One rowdy game was very like the English game of fox and geese ; the trader said it was a native game, but the resemblance to the English game is so striking that I think it must have been introduced. One big girl was chosen as leader, and all the smaller girls tailed off behind her holding each other round the waist ; one lively child was left out by herself, and she placed herself in front of the head of the tail, and began an animated parley—every now and then, when least expected, making a dash to try to grab one of the children forming the tail. The head and tail had to be very quick to avoid being caught ; and the game waxed fast and furious, and was not concluded until all the children had been stolen from the tail. Another equally noisy game was somewhat similar. One girl was chosen as mother, several more, her supposed children, were placed crouched upon the ground close together. The mother gave them a few vigorous spanks and some hectoring instructions, and then sallied out on an errand. During her absence a girl, personating a strange woman, would step out of a bush, drag off one of the children, hide it, and then sit down



close to the rest of them looking innocent. Then the mother would return, miss her child, spank and scold the others, and make enquiries of the stranger, who of course was quite ignorant of the whereabouts of the missing child. This would continue till all the children were stolen, and the mother and stranger fought, when the children would escape and run away screaming.

The Funafuti game of hide-and-seek was almost identical with the English one, although it had a native name, and was claimed as a native game.

The simplest toys were those used in the native game corresponding to our tip-cat; these were just two pieces of wood, one larger than the other, the larger piece being used to strike one end of the other. This game was very solemnly played by the small boys, who did a great deal of arguing and measuring, for in tipping the small stick it had to be tipped in certain directions and to certain distances.

A very good, long, curved whistle was made by the children out of the hollow petiole of the pawpaw leaf; and the children generally took these green whistles into the water with them to help swell the uproar that usually accompanied a bathing party.

The native toy windmill, or peka, is a very simple affair, but spins well in the wind. The children use, instead of the stick, a piece of palm-pinnule petiole, tied into a knot at one end, which serves the same purpose as the pin in the English article; the windmill's arms are plaited out of palm-pinnule, or pandanus leaf, and there are always four of them.

The teano, or native balls, are really cubes, most cleverly plaited out of palm or pandanus leaf. They are very strong, and will stand a great deal of knocking about. The smallest of my piccaninnies, a child certainly not more than six years old, could plait these well and rapidly. In the use of ears, eyes, nose, tongue, and fingers, especially fingers, these little brownies surpass the smartest Kindergarten children I have ever seen.

When plaiting a ball they start by tying together three long strips of pandanus leaf or palm-pinnule. These they weave cunningly together, rolling the plaiting round on itself, until they have made a cube (not a ball) as large as a cricket ball; they then tuck in the stray ends so carefully that it is difficult to find out where they are, and there you have a neat solid teano plaited from within outwards in about ten minutes.

I often saw the boys playing with two equal-sized pieces of cocoa-nut shell connected by a fairly long piece of native sinnet. When I asked what these were for, the boys would pop the piece of sinnet round their necks, place their feet on the convex side of the shell (the string coming between the big and second toes), and off they would trot on these queer little clogs. They seemed to like it, but white children might find it painful exercise.

The girl children enjoyed playing "being grown up" better than any other game, and they would plait mats, fish, cook, scold their play-children, and look very wise and important. Funafuti children at

play are the prettiest, most lovable little scraps of mischief imaginable, but they certainly seem to be utterly without feeling. The pushing, spanking, thumping, and jumping on that these scraps do and endure during a game would make the pluckiest white child howl with pain.

## CHAPTER XV.

### MISSIONARIES AND MORALS—LAWS OLD AND NEW

THE trader often laughed about the old religion of Funafuti, which he called devil worship. He said he had tried to put them off it by laughing at the absurd tricks of the devil priest, or "devil doctor," as he called him. It seems that the devil priest had more influence than the king, because of his supposed supernatural powers; he was consulted about the weather, called upon to say whether the spirits were favourable for a camping-out or a fishing excursion, and generally played "Sir Oracle." When he was consulting his familiar he used to retire into a hut full of smoke, where he would be half suffocated with the fumes; and when the spirit who thus delighted in the suffering of his priest finally gave his answer, the poor old "devil doctor" would emerge from his hut with eyes inflamed and running tears of agony. On these occasions the trader would reason with the poor fanatic in this style: "Wotcher makin' y' self so oncomfortable for, y' ole fool, y' know as well as I do yer spirits is all dam nonsense." This style of reasoning, though probably convincing enough in its way, did not alter

the habits of the "devil doctor," perhaps because he earned his living by means of his smoky and painful mysteries. It was also a custom to smoke an evil spirit out of a man who was supposed to be "possessed." The patient suffered badly, and the fees were high.

It must have been hard luck for the last of the "devil doctors" when Christianity was introduced, and rapidly stole from him the faith and allegiance of his dupes. The stories regarding the manner in which Christianity was introduced into the Ellice Group are varied and conflicting. The trader's story is that two Christian boys from Rotuma came and taught the people, that the people listened readily, and when the *John Williams* arrived with a native pastor to organize the mission properly, they found the whole island already Christian. Another story is that some Christian Gilbert islanders were cast away in a canoe, and were stranded weak from starvation on one of the Ellice Islands; as soon as they were strong enough they preached the Gospel, and the whole of the group was finally converted by them. Perhaps there is truth in both these stories. If the second one is true, the Gilbert islanders must first have learnt the Samoan or Funafuti language, as Gilbert islanders speak an entirely different language from the Ellice islanders. Whatever may be the truth of this, it certainly is the fact that about thirty years ago the mission ship of the London Missionary Society arrived in Funafuti, and properly organized both church and school, and that their

Samoa pastors have been resident there ever since, and found the islanders easy to convert to, and keep in the faith.

The trader thinks that the Samoan pastor is all the same to the natives as the old devil doctor, also that they are just as superstitious about the Christian hell and devil, as they were about the spirits they used to worship in old days. They certainly are superstitious ; but so also are many Europeans after centuries of Christian influence.

The native superstitions are childish and amusing. For instance, they loathe the dark, and will not readily walk alone in it ; anyone who has to go abroad after sundown takes care to provide plenty of palm-leaf torches (lama), and a companion if possible. There was an old woman dying while we were on the island, and all the natives feared to go into the bush, even with a companion and a light, dreading that the spirit of the old woman would catch them by the leg. They seem, however, not to be afraid of spirits in the daylight, and walk fearlessly in their burying ground, which is about a mile south of the village church. It will take much more than thirty years, I should imagine, for all the old-time superstitions to die out.

There is no drunkenness in Funafuti, and consequently no street brawls, except on the very rare occasions when a civilized white strays there, and demonstrates to the natives how well the white folks obey the laws of the religion they are so anxious to spread.

Traders in the old times tried to dispose of some

of their healing compound, "trade gin," to the unsuspecting natives, but the missionaries interposed, and would not allow the people to use alcohol; and since legislation has passed into the hands of the Commissioners they have endorsed the law which makes it a serious misdemeanour to sell alcoholic liquors to natives.

The natives of this island have never, like the Gilbert islanders, made an intoxicating drink out of cocoa-nut sap; neither have they inherited the Samoan custom of drinking kava. Missionaries and commissioners found the natives a sober people, and are trying to keep them so.

Curiously enough, any white man resident on the island may buy or drink as much alcohol as he likes, so long as he does not give or sell it to the natives; and yet he is subject to all the other laws of the island.

The Funafutians are as peaceable as well as a sober folk; they have few traditions of war and were never well able to defend themselves, consequently they were very much at the mercy of the Tongan and other Pacific Vikings. Now that the islanders are under British protection their peaceable character is a distinct advantage to them and their rulers.

And they are honest, too. So absolutely honest as to astonish white people. For three months I had money, food, clothing, knives, scissors, tools, fish-hooks, cooking utensils, lying in my hut unlocked, and to be had easily for the stealing, and nothing was ever stolen. It is impossible to lock up a Funafuti

hut, so that all my possessions were left unprotected for several days together while I was camping out on other islets. Nothing was so much as touched. And yet these belongings of mine were as valuable in the eyes of a native as plate and jewellery are in the eyes of a European burglar.

I believe the Ellice Group is the only one in the whole of the Pacific which bears the reputation of being absolutely honest.

In Funafuti we could leave our belongings about in any part of the island; sometimes they would be left where they were, sometimes they would be brought back to us, but they were never stolen. Nails are an expensive article in Funafuti, yet the native boys would never take so much as a bent one that they found on the ground near our camp, without first saying, "You want im fella?" They would go off delighted with the treasure when told they might keep it.

The trader said he couldn't make out how it was that the people were so honest now, for they were not always so. He thinks, perhaps, it was owing to a lesson taught the people by an American ship, many years ago, before he came to the island. The story among the people was that an American ship called at the island, and several of the natives went on board. One of the natives saw, coveted, and stole a chronometer. The theft was discovered just as the canoes had left the ship, and the captain sent a boat after the canoes to try to recover his property. The canoes would not stop, and so the



sailors fired on the natives, killing or wounding several. In their terror the natives threw the chronometer into the lagoon, and as many as escaped the shots hurried ashore, among them the thief, whose jaw had been wounded by a shot. The islanders wanted to kill him as he had been the author of the tragedy, but the man managed to crawl into the sanctuary of the king's house, and the king refused to give him up, saying that enough harm had already been done, and that this man's life should not be sacrificed too. He warned them also never to lay hands on the property of a white man again.

This may all have been true, and the horror of the incident may have deterred that generation from meddling with a white man's goods. But they still continued to steal from each other, if I am to believe a story of an incident that the trader said happened after he landed on the island.

This story was told by the trader publicly at a sing-sing. Here it is:—

“Years ago in Funafuti stealing was punished with death; and once, when the cocoa-nut season was very bad, and the people were half starved, one woman who had three children pretended to be ill, and lay in her hut all day; at night she crept out when everyone else was sleeping and stole a few cocoa-nuts from a neighbour's store to feed herself and her children. The owner soon began to miss the nuts, but no one detected the thief, until they agreed secretly to sit up all night to watch; then the sham sick woman was caught in the act.

She was brought before the king and council, and condemned to die, she and her infant at the breast. They carried her to a tiny islet of the atoll, bound her hand and foot, and left her there with her innocent little baby. After several days had elapsed some of the men went to see how she was getting on, and found her dead, but the starving baby still lived. One man suggested bringing the babe away, but the majority were for leaving the child there, and it was left to finish its horrible death."

It seems impossible to believe that such a tale could be true of the immediate forefathers of the present kind, affectionate, and happy Funafutians. Yet the trader and the oldest inhabitants vouched for the truth of this "little incident"!

Perhaps this kind of severe punishment helped to deter people from stealing as much as did the sharp lesson taught by the American ship. Personally, I am inclined to think that the almost absolute honesty displayed during the last quarter of a century is due to the influence and teaching of the servants of the London Missionary Society. The natives seem to have fully grasped the moral code and the main doctrines of Christianity, as taught them by these puritan pastors, and what is more they live up to their light, and the general result is one of which the society may be justly proud.

Did you ask if these wonderful natives are truthful as well? Um! It is difficult to say. To begin with they are very courteous, and they consequently object to blurting out a blunt "yes" or "no"; and they

do not like to refuse a request point-blank, and will not do so while they can evade with a gracious "koituai" ("bine-by"); and they like to tell you what they think you wish them to say rather than the actual facts; and finally, they are extremely sensitive to ridicule, and do not for that reason care to furnish you with too many particulars about themselves and their doings.

All these things are in a measure opposed to candid truthfulness. I do not wish to imply that I consider the Funafutians are strikingly untruthful—they are not so; indeed most of their evasions are resorted to in order to avoid hurting people's feelings, and are on a par with the society dame's "not-at-home" fiction.

As to industry, I have already noticed that the natives do not suffer so much from the primal curse as do their white brethren in civilized lands. They can work hard in spurts, and do so on occasions, on big fishing expeditions, or when loading copra for the trader. But a spurt takes it out of them very considerably, and it is always followed by days of absolute rest. At home they seem to have no staying power for continuous heavy work, although when fed on "bull-a-ma-cow," as they call beef, on Queensland sugar plantations, they develop into splendid workers. The islanders, however, work better than did their ancestors, for the missionaries have taught them to cultivate taro and other edible arum roots, bananas, bread-fruit, and pawpaws; and by the modern written law the magistrate is bound

to see that every man plants his land, so that no part of the small space is lost.

In olden times men were too thoughtless and improvident to plant cocoa-nut palms to replace those blown down by hurricanes, or eaten down by white ant, and consequently many portions of the various islets were barren. Now every available spot is planted, and food is abundant.

The cultivation is not hard work, the soil is sandy, and easily turned over with a light hoe; and the enriching consists of placing wreaths of leaves (usually of pukavai) round the roots of the plants, as stated in a previous chapter. The natives say that these leaves rot very quickly, and that the plants nourished by them shoot up rapidly; "You can see 'em grow after it," as the trader said.

The natives do not work too long at a time in their gardens, or anywhere else; they are all independent landowners, not needing to work for wages, and only doing so on occasions, and can therefore take their own time, with easy minds, for working, resting, sleeping, smoking, and chatting.

The land is owned by the people; every man has his own tiny estate, which was bequeathed to him by his forbears. Some have much larger portions than others, but all have enough to feed off, and if any man is not satisfied with his belongings, there is nothing to hinder him working for wages either in money or kind. The land is generally bequeathed by the father to his sons, with the understanding that his widow and unmarried daughters feed off it; sometimes it is left

to the widow, and divided among the children at her death; sometimes it is left entirely to daughters when there is no son; and sometimes portions are left expressly for daughters, even when there are sons. It seemed, so far as I could gather, that every man had a right to dispose of his property as he saw fit, not by written wills in the old times, but by making the king and chief men witnesses, these witnesses being bound to see justice done in the case of infant orphans.

The men who work the land for young orphans have a right to part of the produce of the land, and they usually adopt the children, and treat them like their own, resigning the land as soon as the children are of age to work it themselves.

Any dispute about land used to be settled by the king at a big palaver; now all such disputes are referred to the British Commissioner at his annual visit.

Now that the people can write they prefer to write their bequests as well as their love-letters, so that some sort of written wills will soon be among the civilized treasures of the natives.

I never could discover how each person knew his or her own land; there were no fences, no dividing ditches, no surveyors' pegs, no landmarks of any kind that I could see, and yet every man knew his own patch even when it was right in the middle of another man's patch. I think they knew it by the trees in the cocoa-nut land; they certainly knew the owners of all the odd pawpaws, bananas, and bread-

fruit trees that were scattered about the village, and everyone respected his neighbour's right to the fruit of his cultivated trees.

The common pandanus (*fala vao*) grew self-sown everywhere, and I noticed that the fruit and leaves of this variety were free to all, no matter on whose land they grew. A large fruited variety of pandanus (*fala kai*), which was planted and cultivated, was not free to all, but, like cocoa-nuts and bananas, the property of the man who planted it.

So far as I could gather, anyone could build himself a hut anywhere in the village without paying ground rent, all clear spaces being available for the purpose, and the boat-houses, boats, and canoes could be placed anywhere most convenient to the owners along the sandy shore of the lagoon. There were several good sailing boats on the island belonging to the natives; each boat belonged to several men who had clubbed together and raised the sum of £40 or £50 by the sale of copra. The natives having amassed the necessary sum would give the trader an order for the kind of boat they required, and he would order it from Sydney through the supercargo of the trading ship. The names of two of the boats were the *Sini* (Sydney) and the *Palameino* (Balmain, a suburb of Sydney).

The native canoes are dug out of the soft trunks of puka trees, and every man is his own canoe builder; but if no puka tree grows on his land he must bargain for one, if he needs it, from a more fortunate neighbour.

When a native wants some fish for himself and family, he fishes with hook, spear, or net on the reef, and contents himself with catching a few; but when a "boatie" goes out on a fishing expedition and brings back a boat-load, a conch is blown, the whole village assembles, and the fish is equally divided among the various families. The trader told me that this was always done in the olden times with both fish and turtle, but that the people were now beginning to want to keep all they got for themselves and their immediate relations and friends; as he put it, "they're gotten very avaricious since the missionaries come," by which one is led to infer that the methods of exchange adopted by traders are not such as to inculcate avarice.

The "fonu" (turtle) is still held to be the king's property, and is always formally presented to the king before being divided among the people. In former days only men were allowed to kill, dress, cook, and eat the turtle, and this was done with much ceremony and singing. Even now, although I have seen women eating turtle, I never saw any but men preparing and cooking it. The men must have been rather scandalized on the occasions when they presented us with a turtle with great pomp and ceremony, for I, not knowing their prejudices, defiled it by touching it; in fact I cut steaks off it before their very eyes, before sending the body down to the drill men in our camp.

Turtle steak fried is excellent, as I can testify; and turtle eggs curried are also pleasant to the taste,

but one does not yearn after them as a standing dish for breakfast, dinner, and supper.

The government of Funafuti seems to have been at all times somewhat republican; the people had a voice in the choice of both king and sub-chief, and usually selected men for these offices who were respected for their achievements in work, talk, and sport. The sub-chief was apparently both prime minister and probable successor to the "throne." Now, under the British protectorate the king is little more than the nominal ruler; the sub-chief does the greater part of the actual ruling, and is responsible to the British Commissioner. All state matters, great or small, are discussed fully by all the people in big palavers conducted by the king and Opataia (the present sub-chief); in small matters Opataia's ruling stands, but all important questions are left to be decided by the British Commissioner. A British Commissioner in the Pacific—"the great white chief," as he is called—needs to be a perfect encyclopædia of knowledge, for he is expected to be ready with prompt decisions on all kinds of cases, legal, social, and ecclesiastical.

The island regulations in most cases are excellent; for instance, it is a rule that every woman keeps the space round her own hut tidy. Every Saturday, therefore, you will see all the women busy for a few minutes sweeping up and removing all leaves and scraps that have collected round the huts and in the streets during the week, so that on Sunday the village is trim and neat. It is never very untidy during the week.



The drainage question will not affect Funafuti for some time to come, because none of the houses are more than twenty yards from the sea, and it suits the free-and-easy islanders to deposit their rubbish below high-water mark, and leave the high tide to do the tidying up. This arrangement is sometimes inconvenient and distasteful to white people, who have prejudices in favour of a non-odorous and clean sandy beach at low tide as well as at high tide, and it also detracts somewhat from the romantic pleasure of bathing in the lagoon, but on the whole it is a very satisfactory sanitary arrangement.

The soil of the island is so porous, and the rain so frequent and heavy, that liquid impurities are quickly washed away; and the innumerable crabs are excellent and economical scavengers.

There are neither water nor lighting rates in Funafuti; every man catches what water he can in a wooden kumete (dish) under a palm tree; and since our expedition there are four good four-hundred-gallon iron tanks for the use of the natives; also there is no need to light the streets in a village where the inhabitants are not supposed to be out of their huts after sundown.

Before the advent of the missionaries there was no such thing as morality from the Christian point of view. In the good old times which traders remember with such genuine regret, wives and husbands were not supposed to be faithful to each other; a man had no exclusive right to his wife, but he had to her work, so that wives were secured

and valued on account of the increase of wealth they brought in their ability to make mats and such-like articles of value. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that even to the present day a man is just as contented with adopted children as with his own.

But, alas! those reforming missionaries did not approve of such free-and-easy relations between the sexes, and one of the first things they did, after securing the king and sub-chief as friends and converts, was to get regulations framed to enforce Christian laws in this matter of marriage. At first there were difficulties in the way; all the people were not converted, and force of habit is powerful. But the rulers were thorough-going and determined, and they organized a system of nocturnal surprise visits, which made life irksome to those who preferred the old customs. In order to nullify the effects of the night surprises, the naughty, unconverted people introduced house-dogs, which by their timely barking gave law-breakers a chance to escape. But the government of Funafuti ordered all the bow-wows to be executed, and issued a law which made it illegal to keep such pets. After this slaughter of the innocents things were too lively for the unconverted folks, and they, being easy-going if anything, gradually left off trying to evade the law, and by degrees the new system of morality became general. Now Funafuti is one of the most strictly moral places in the world.

Yet these people are not solemn and prudish, they all express themselves on delicate subjects with the

unembarrassed frankness of children, and there is no limit to harmless fun and flirtation.

There were no people leading lives of vice on the island ; I knew of one mother among the unmarried girls, and of one divorced woman, but both were leading exemplary lives under the wing of my native mother.

The story of the divorced woman, as told me by the trader, is a curious one. She was unhappy in her married life, and appealed to the native magistrate to set her free from the husband who ill-treated her. The magistrate puzzled over the law as set down in the Bible, and finally told the woman that if she wanted to be divorced it was necessary for her, according to Christian law, to break the seventh commandment ! She did.

Since the island has become British such ignorant misreadings of Christian law are not possible, the Commissioner sees to that.

A Funafuti hut consists of one undivided room, and sometimes two or three families inhabit one ; thus it is almost as difficult in Funafuti to instil into the people any refined sense of modesty as it is in the densely crowded slums of the "centres of civilization." But the native teachers have done well in this direction also ; they have not introduced partitioned houses, but the married people and the young children usually sleep in the hut ; the boys sleep (in very noisy parties too) on the rocks on the windward side of the island, where they get plenty of fresh air, few mosquitoes, and sundry sudden showers. Many of the unmarried

girls sleep in one of the mission buildings, which is given up to their use, the others sleep in the huts of old widows, like my native mother, for instance, who sheltered four girls besides the divorced woman and the unfortunate child-mother.

In former days, when a husband wearied of his wife he calmly sent her back to her people, and if a woman wearied of her husband she simply returned to her mother, and the thing was settled ; either husband or wife thus easily divorced could re-mate at pleasure.

Under present conditions women in Funafuti are well protected ; the British Commissioners have made it impossible for women to be unfairly oppressed by the law. This reminds me that once a Commissioner had occasion to punish a man for beating his wife, since which time one man, at least, has had a sorry time of it. The people know that a man must not beat his wife, but nothing so far has been said about a woman not beating her husband ; and one poor young man, in dread of the law, submits to be scratched and kicked regularly by his pretty little vixen of a wife ! I wonder if the maltreated husband will appeal to the Commissioner for protection ?

The heathen laws relating to population pressed very heavily on the women. Before the era of Christianity and cultivation, foodstuffs often became scarce, and infanticide was commanded, as one means of keeping the population within the provision possibilities. Every mother was allowed to keep alternate children, but the second, fourth, and so on, had to be destroyed. There was no getting out of it, except

by paying heavy ransoms in the form of thousands of fish and cocoa-nuts, which ransoms would be almost impossible for any mother to procure. Very pretty romances might be woven out of the efforts of heart-broken parents to raise ransoms to save the lives of their children, but I failed to light on any interesting records of such devotion. On the contrary, the people seemed to submit like lambs to the destruction of their children, and many a woman's health and life were sacrificed to this cruel law.

The missionaries interfered here too, and as with the mission came trade and cultivation, the people fell in readily with the new teaching, and make kind and affectionate parents. They are somewhat easy-going in the matter of training their children, in fact it seemed to me that the children were not trained at all, but allowed to grow up. I never saw a woman ill-treat a child, nay, I never saw one so much as give a well-deserved slap; but I once saw a half-caste white man reason with a small child of two by hurling the butt end of a palm petiole at it. I thought the child was killed, and rushed up to it, but it had only had the breath knocked out of it, and when it recovered it raised the echoes with indignant bellows, until I pacified it with the present of a reel of coloured cotton.

Owing to the practice of infanticide, and to the fact that large numbers of the young men were decoyed away to work in the Peruvian mines and never returned, the old population decreased from 2000 to about 300, but since the laws have been altered,

and food is abundant, the population, unlike that of many Pacific islands, is steadily increasing.

There are now both written and unwritten laws in Funafuti ; the unwritten laws are on small matters of jurisdiction, and are altered or added to by the natives as occasions arise.

One of the unwritten laws provides that a man who is athirst far from home may help himself to drinking cocoa-nuts off another man's trees, so long as he reports the fact as soon as he returns to the village. Another law provides that any man who wishes to preserve the fruit of a tree for any special purpose must put a mark (taboo) on the tree ; I never saw any of these taboo marks, but my piccaninnies, when out walking with me, would frequently point to trees and say "taboo." The palms at the south end of the island were apparently all tabooed for copra.

The written laws are all in Samoan, and the sub-chief allowed me to borrow, for a few days, the only printed copy of them that the island possessed. I copied them, and on my return to Sydney was fortunate enough to get them translated by the Rev. S. Ella, a great authority on Pacific languages, who has been engaged in mission work among the islands under the London Missionary Society for fifty years.

These laws arrange about chiefs, judges, scribes, juries, watchmen, and their salaries ; they fix the dates of courts and councils and state their powers, and they contain regulations about prisoners, witnesses, trials, judgments, and punishments.

The following are the most important ones, which I hope will prove interesting reading :—

1. A murderer must die, but not without the concurrence of the British chief.

2. A thief shall be imprisoned for six months with hard labour ; he shall likewise restore the stolen goods, or make payment for the same. If the thief is a man, he shall, in addition, be beaten with ten stripes.

3. Quarrelling shall be punished with fines or imprisonment, according to the judge's discretion.

4. Adulterers and adulteresses shall be punished with from six to twelve months' imprisonment. An adulterer must make money compensation to the injured husband, and the adulteress must make a fixed number of hats, mats, and rolls of sinnet for the public treasury.

5. Rape shall be punished with one year's imprisonment.

6. For setting fire to plantations or houses, whether wilfully or through carelessness, the punishment shall be hard labour for six months or a year ; but if the offender is able to pay in full for all the damage done, the imprisonment is not enforced.

7. Anyone using angry words and insulting language shall be fined £1, or be imprisoned for one month with hard labour.

8. Any person making mischief, by spreading lying reports in the land, shall be imprisoned for six months with hard labour.

9. Anyone found guilty of drinking intoxicating

liquors shall be fined £1, or imprisoned for one month with hard labour.

10. The felling of cocoa-nut palms in anger or envy shall be punished with three months' hard labour.

11. The High Chief must see that all waste or recovered land is planted with cocoa-nut palms, and that all beacons \* are repaired and renewed.

12. No man must work in any great works, or gather cocoa-nuts, or do any other labour on a Sunday. The cooking of food, or bathing, is not forbidden; neither is anything essential to life or the safety of property forbidden.

(The latter part of this law is a very necessary addition, for before the coming of the British Commissioner a man was fined 1s. every time he absented himself from church, and was fined and imprisoned for washing himself or cooking food on a Sunday. All strangers staying on the island were made to obey this law, and the trader told me an amusing story about a Chinaman, who was put ashore at Funafuti for misbehaving on his ship, and who was obliged to live on the island for some considerable time. Master Chow-chow felt the Sabbaths wearisome, and by way of passing the time went off in a canoe to fish. The whole village rose in its wrath, and compelled him to come on shore and rest all

\* Danger marks showing positions of shoals in the lagoon, and also the great white steering beacon, shaped like a monster bee-hive of coral lime, built by the late Commissioner, Mr. C. R. Swayne, at the south-east entrance to the lagoon.



day out of respect for their laws. And he had to do as they ordered him, although he blasphemed horribly at this interference with his liberty, and tried to explain that his religion was unlike theirs.

I never saw a native cook, bathe, or do any work, except dress himself and eat, on a Sunday ; all washing of their bodies and clothes, and all cooking was done on a Saturday.)

13. The High Chief must see that all children attend school, and that the teacher's salary is paid.

14. The laws shall be the same for males and females ; but a female must not be made to work on the roads, or to do any oppressive labour. " Hard labour " for a female means making hats, mats, or sinnet for the public treasury. But if any female is obstreperous, the judge may order her to be bound and kept in solitary confinement until she becomes submissive.

I was curious to know how this primitive people had managed to secure for themselves such an admirable code of laws. So on my return to civilization I sought out Mr. C. R. Swayne, who had been British Commissioner at the time when these laws were printed. He informed me that soon after the Protectorate of the Line Islands had been proclaimed by Great Britain he was appointed Commissioner, and the chief part of his work was to see that the people were supplied with fair and just laws. He began this work by collecting from all the people in every island of the group an account of the

unwritten laws which had gradually come to be respected and obeyed among them. He took a great mass of evidence on these unwritten laws, wrote down all of them, cut out any objectionable ones, added such as were necessary, and modified the others considerably. He thus evolved a code which could be enforced in all the islands alike, one which would satisfy the British High Commissioner in the Pacific, and yet was by no means a new or revolutionary code, so that it also satisfied the natives.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### FOOD AND COOKING

THE main object in life with all Funafutians is to get enough *kaikai* (food), and most of the work done by them consists of the cultivation, procuring, and cooking food.

In olden times, before the missionaries encouraged the people to cultivate bananas, bread-fruit, and taro, and when therefore the food supply depended entirely on the cocoa-nut season and the fisheries, starvation times were not uncommon. Now the laws compel all landowners to keep their land fully planted with food-producing trees, and food is plentiful.

It is impossible not to be struck with the common sense shown by the islanders in simplifying processes and reducing labour in the preparation of food. There is perfect equality in the island as regards food and methods of cooking. The king and all his subjects eat the same kind of food, cooked and served in the same way ; this fact clears the ground a good deal, and makes it unnecessary to have separate cooks or kitchens.

Almost every hut has its own cook-house at the

rear, but that does not necessitate its being used every time its owner wants his food cooked—quite the contrary. A cook-house is a convenient store for firewood, for cocoa-nut-shell saucepans, for tuai, old cocoa-nuts, cooking-stones, tabola, etc., and of course it can be used for cooking when anyone wishes so to use it. As a matter of fact, two, three, or more women generally unite forces for mutual help and society, and a man or two generally offers his services, so that a big cooking-day is more like an American Bee on a small scale; and they cook sometimes in one cook-house, sometimes in another, according to fancy.

Saturday is the great cooking-day, and next to Sunday it was the most interesting day in the week to me. I always finished all my preparations for Sunday before the midday meal on Saturday, so that I had the whole afternoon free to spend in a native cook-house watching the proceedings.

The cook-houses were not very impressive structures, and they were easily run up. You need a few saplings stuck into the ground so as to inclose a floor space of about six by eight feet; these saplings should then be tied together and to a light ridge-pole, not more than eight feet from the ground; a few rafters tied down each side of the sloping roof, and fastened to these, so as to keep out most of the wet, a loose thatch of rough palm-leaf mats, and there's your cook-house. Walls and chimney are dispensed with. One or two light beams fastened across inside, with mats laid on, will make practicable shelves, and also

serve as excellent booby-traps, if you are not careful to stoop nearly double when entering.

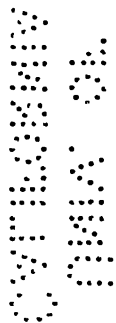
The floor of a cook-house is always divided into halves by the simple plan of laying a small sapling across it; this acts as a dividing line between the space devoted to the native oven and that used as squatting ground for the cooks. The oven end contains a shallow hollow scooped in the sand, a heap of sand, a pile of cooking-stones (harder kinds of coral are the only ones obtainable on the island, but ships' ballast of basalt and such-like hard rock is carefully treasured, as it is so much more durable for cooking-stones than the crumbling coral), a good-sized heap of dried cocoa-nut husks for fuel, and a few old mats.

On the other end of the floor sit the cooks with the cooking utensils, and heaps of raw food, within easy reach. I generally sat on a box, provided for me by a polite native, just on the inside of the hut, and to windward of the fire, so as to get as much air and as little smoke as possible; but the wind had an unpleasant Saturday-afternoon habit of coming in little puffs from all directions unexpectedly, so as to give everyone a fair share of the smoke from the smouldering husk fire.

The kitchen utensils are not numerous, complex, or expensive. A Funafuti woman needs two wooden dishes (kumete), one large one for mixing grated roots, and one small one for lolo; a scraper (tuai) for flaking cocoa-nut kernel; a number of cocoa-nut shells for saucepans; a flat piece of iron (sisi) to crack



Two Cooks.



open cocoa-nut shells ; a huge European knife, rather like the formidable weapon flourished by British butchers ; a few palm-leaf baskets (tabola) ; a good number of pua, banana, and bread-fruit leaves, also to be used as saucepans ; and a cocoa-nut shell or glass bottle. Glass bottles are much prized, and the natives prefer them to the cocoa-nut-shell article of home manufacture.

It is not absolutely necessary for every house-keeper to possess all these utensils ; neighbours are neighbourly in Funafuti, and whoever lacks sisi or kumete borrows without apology from her more fortunate neighbour, who lends without making any favour of it.

On Saturday morning men and women will collect the food, old cocoa-nuts (niu), green drinking nuts (pi), taro, ikalaoi and pulaka, roots and leaves, palm leaves, sprouting cocoa-nuts (utanu), fish and crabs. Midday is taken up with a meal, a smoke, and a sleep ; but between two and three o'clock the cooks assemble, and the work of cooking begins. There is always a large amount to be done on Saturdays, because the natives eat more on Sundays and go in for a large number of services, so that Monday is a sort of holiday after the spiritual exertions of the preceding day, and thus food is required for forty-eight hours.

After proper time for rest and contemplation the cooks would set to work in earnest ; two would be told off to see to the native oven, and this was the most objectionable task, because they had to



work in the blackened sand and ashes, and always got the worst of the smoke and heat. First of all they scraped out the circular hollow in the sand with scraps of cocoa-nut shell, and when this was clean and smooth they arranged in it a great heap of broken pieces of cocoa-nut shell and husks, which they tore up with their teeth and fingers; this, when lighted, made a very hot but smouldering fire. Next they arranged the cooking stones cunningly on the heap of fuel, so that every stone should get a good amount of heat from the fire; after which they had only to sit down and watch the fire.

Meantime others have been plaiting baskets and mats out of portions of a green palm leaf. The baskets are to carry away the cooked food in, and the mats will be used in the cooking. One woman or man will then slip the iron end of a tuai through a fresh, green mat, sit cross-legged on the top of the wooden end of the tuai, and begin to scrape the kernels of old cocoa-nuts. This is interesting work to watch; the old nuts, stripped of their husks, are taken up in the left hand and dealt a couple of smart taps with a sisi, and at once fall into clean-cut halves; then each half-nut is taken up, turned over the teeth of the tuai, and scraped rhythmically, the kernel falling on the green mat in a snowy shower of curly flakes.

A great deal of the flaked kernel will fall on the naked, unwashed knee of the person scraping, but that is brushed back into the heap on the mat; where is the use in being so very particular?

Cocoa-nut grating is hard work ; I learned to do it, and my back and arms ached for days afterwards.

When there is enough flaked kernel ready, another cook kneads it until a milk-white juice begins to flow, then the whole thing is put inside a mass of clean frayed fibre (tauaga), and twisted and squeezed till all the milky juice is extracted. This juice is caught in a kumete and is called lolo ; it is like a thick, rich cream flavoured with cocoa-nut. Lolo is used in much the same way as we use butter, milk, or cream, and it enters into every compound dish in Funafuti. We found it delicious, satisfying, and nourishing, but distinctly bilious.

The dry, squeezed kernel left in the tauaga tastes like sawdust scented with cocoa-nut oil, and is thrown to the pigs and fowls.

While the lolo is being made one of the cooks will be scraping taro, and the other arum roots. This is a very neat operation too; the roots are placed broadside down on a clean bread-fruit leaf, held in place by finger and thumb on the narrow end, and then a small sea-shell is used to scrape off all the fibrous roots, yellow skin, and dirt. When the roots are scraped they can be put just as they are on the hot stones ; or placed in a supple banana leaf, with lolo poured over them, rolled up in the leaf, and cooked thus ; or if you feel disposed for luxuries, and have some green banana, you can grate the arum roots and bananas to a pulp (on a rough slab of coral), and mix this pulp up with lolo till the whole looks like porridge. Then you roll up portions of this thick batter-like substance in

banana leaves and bake them. The result of this is a kind of stiff pudding, called solopulaka, a very disappointing compound to a European palate when cooked, for it looks like grey mud, tastes of smoked oil, and feels rough on the tongue like raw oatmeal. The natives think a great deal of it, and it is an extremely nourishing food, as one can see from the ingredients used in its manufacture.

If bread-fruit is in season, as it was for the first six weeks of my stay in Funafuti, it makes a very pleasant variety in the food. It is scraped, cut up into quarters, and roasted on the hot stones; or it is pulled into small pieces, and packed away inside empty cocoa-nut shells, lolo is poured in to fill up the spaces, a leaf and a piece of cocoa-nut shell are placed over the opening in the shell to prevent the steam escaping, and a very nice bread-fruit pudding is made that way.

If you leave a bread-fruit until it is like a custard inside, it can be baked in its skin, and makes a "good English pudding," the trader said, but he did not specify what sort of an English pudding, and I am not going to do it either.

Taro tops are excellent when cooked in the Samoan way, *i.e.*, cooked whole with lolo and a little sea-water, all tied up together carefully in bread-fruit leaves—this is called *palu-same*, and is like spinach cooked in cocoa-nut oil.

During all this preparation of food the cooks need little "snacks," and we frequently refreshed ourselves with green banana roasted in its jacket,

then peeled, dipped in lolo, and eaten hot. It is very good.

When you have a goodly array of bundles of palu-same, of solopulaka, bread-fruit, and lolo in shells, lumps of bread-fruit, arum roots, and unpeeled green bananas, all you need is to plait up your fish (whole, unscaled, and not disembowelled) in palm leaves, and you are ready for the oven. And by this time the oven is ready for you; the fuel has all burnt away, and the cooking-stones lie hot and glowing on the bottom and sides of the shallow concavity which serves as an oven. The fire-makers rearrange the hot stones quickly, with the aid of native tongs (a piece of green palm petiole bent up like sugar-tongs), and the various packages of food are arranged in the hollow, everything all mixed up together, fish, bananas, and bundles; a few hot stones are popped on top, and then the oven is closed in. This has to be done very thoroughly, and the Funafuti way is to pile a number of green leaves (pulaka and pua when obtainable) over the food, then a few old mats, and then the sand is piled on, at least four inches thick all over and round, and pressed and trodden in carefully to prevent any of the heat escaping. There is nothing more to be done now for an hour or two, according to the quantity of food there is in the oven; no fire tending as in our civilized kitchens, so the cooks can rest, and smoke, sleep, or chatter till it is time to open the oven. Then all the people concerned either help to scrape off the sand and remove the leaves, or wait round with baskets handy for their portions. The cooked food is

then taken to the huts, together with sprouting cocoa-nuts and green drinking cocoa-nuts, which are foods to be enjoyed raw.

Then comes the weekly bath. The women nearest to it go to the bathing pool for women (*vai fafine*), a stagnant pool of green water, in which most of the clothes of the villagers are washed, and in which most of the women are also washed. It is a filthy hole, and is accountable for a good deal of itch, ringworm, and yaws. But it was very difficult to make any of the women see that it was not a highly desirable place in which to perform their weekly ablutions. A few of those who lived a long way from the pool bathed in the lagoon as I suggested, and then came up and rinsed themselves with a little rain-water in the main street. When this is over there is no more work of any account to be done for two days at least.

The commonest food used by the islanders is cocoa-nut; they eat it in several stages of its growth, and usually raw; it supplies the place of bread.

The kernel of the old cocoa-nut (*niu*), the nut as it is exported to Europe, is broken out of the shell and eaten just as it is, but I seldom saw a native drink the fluid from a nut in this stage. A piece of *niu* is eaten with fish or *palu-same*, as we should eat bread.

The full-grown but young green cocoa-nut supplies the commonest beverage, and it is a very refreshing and sustaining drink; it fizzes slightly when first opened, and is like ginger-beer flavoured with cocoa-



A MIDDAY MEAL OF FISH AND COCOANUT.

WAVE OF  
COURTESY



nut. The kernel in a drinking cocoa-nut is thin and soft and semi-transparent, like a very lightly-boiled white of egg; it is scraped out and eaten. I have seen mothers scrape it into a soft, juicy pulp, and feed very young babies with it.

The utanu, or sprouting cocoa-nut, is a favourite food. In this case the kernel, though rich and oily, is relegated to the pigs; the natives eat the sweet, crisp, apple-like ball which has formed inside. I was very much astonished when I first saw a sprouting cocoa-nut. The old nut was covered with its thick, tough case of fibre, and a young leaf had pushed its way through this case in one direction, and a young root had done the same. A native ripped off the husk in several pieces, and disclosed the brown, hard nut-shell, with the leaf and root growing out of the "eyes." He then cracked the shell, which was lined as usual with a kernel about a quarter of an inch thick, but the whole of the central space, which once contained fluid, was filled with a pale green ball, out of which grew the leaf and the root. When the pale green ball was broken up, I saw that it was snow-white and crisp inside, and had a spongy appearance. The natives ate this with evident relish, but I could never eat more than a mouthful at a time, as it was too sickly sweet for my taste.

Some of the old cocoa-nuts are preserved for years in case of times of scarcity, and they receive different names according to the length of time they have been kept. The one-year-old nut called taka-taka



is very good, and only just beginning to turn a bluish colour; but some of the older nuts, though still forming wholesome food, are black, bitter, and unpalatable.

The nut is not the only part of the cocoa-nut tree which is good for food. The central sprout of a young tree is perfectly delicious, but this is seldom taken, as it destroys the tree. The pinnules of the palm leaf are all packed away inside the bud, neatly folded, white and glistening, and the girls pull them out carefully, and strip from them the white epidermis which makes long, delicate, almost transparent streamers; these streamers, tied together on to a piece of wood to serve as a pin, are worn with great effect as hair ornaments. The rest of the butt, especially the thick stalk, destined to be the future petiole, is eaten, and it is the sweetest and daintiest thing in nuts that fairies could dream of, and there is enough in one bud to satisfy a giant's appetite.

One variety of cocoa-nut, a sweet one, is a great delicacy, much esteemed by invalids. The green nut of this species is used, and it is called "outo," and the entire nut is eaten except a thin layer on the very outside of the husk. My piccannies sometimes brought me an outo as a great treat, and they generally stopped to help me eat it. We all sat down in a circle; Polé would tear off the thin, green, outer layer of husk with her teeth and fingers, then she tore off the white fibre under it, and passed pieces of it round the circle, and we all sat and chewed. It was a pleasant but unsightly operation,

this chewing of the fibre, but we cared nought for appearances while we were crunching out the nutty, juicy substance which connected the fibres. The noise made in chewing is distinctly uncivilized, but I tried hard, and found it impossible to chew out fibre without "suzzling." It took us at least half an hour to chew through all that fibre, and the ground round us would be strewed with plugs and strips of discarded fibre, turning brown in the air. Then we came to the shell, which in this stage is thin and crisp, and lined with a delicate transparent film which represents the future kernel. The shell can all be eaten, and tastes like young filberts, and the fluid inside is too good for words on a hot, steamy day, for it is cool and slightly effervescent, and of a very delicate, nutty flavour.

There is a remarkable sweetmeat, called puleleti, made from cocoa-nut too; it looks like a ball of heavy gingerbread, tastes like cocoa-nut icing, and has the merit of keeping good for years. There was a great making of puleleti in the trader's family for our benefit on one occasion, and I watched the process carefully. When it was finished I was not surprised to hear that it was only made on occasions, for it is a costly dish, giving an immense amount of trouble to make, and when it is made it is unwise to take a full meal of it, for it is rich, very sweet, and conducive to thirst.

The ingredients required are only two, a huge pile of flaked cocoa-nut kernel, and a great quantity of kalévi molasses. That doesn't sound so very

expensive or troublesome, but it is. To begin with, it will take two men the whole morning to flake enough kernel for six balls of puleleti, and it takes a large number of old cocoa-nuts, too. It must be flaked on a hot day, because the flaked kernel has to stand in the sun about three hours before it can be made into puleleti. The kalévi is what is often



WOODEN KUMETE AND PALM-LEAF GUTTER  
FOR CATCHING RAIN-WATER.

called "toddy" in other islands ; it is the sap which drips from the cut flowering spathe of a cocoa-nut palm. Kalévi trees have notches cut up their stems to enable the boys to run up and down easily, night and morning, to change the cocoa-nut shell bottles, which are hung under the dripping spathe to catch the sap. Kalévi is a sweet and pleasant juice, and mixed with water it makes a wholesome, nourishing

drink ; the Funafutians have never been in the habit of fermenting this to form the intoxicating drink so much used in the Gilbert Islands. Kalévi when boiled the right length of time makes a brown, thick syrup, exactly like treacle in appearance, which the people call "m'lasses."

The children always get very much excited when molasses are being made, and generally squat round the fire, where it is cooking, in order to get stray licks of the tongs used to stir it, and of the shells in which it is boiled. Sometimes they will have a small quantity given them in a shell ; they boil this a little longer, and it makes a delightful stick-jaw toffee.

When the flaked kernel has been a sufficient length of time in the sun it is swept into a deep, circular kumete ; and a man takes a pounding-stick (tuki-tuki) and bangs away at it vigorously, while a woman from time to time pours in a shell-full of the thick syrup-like molasses. The pounding is very hard work in such a climate, and has to go on a great length of time ; but suddenly oil begins to spit out from the pounded mass, and then the pounding can cease. The man then takes up a handful of the pounded mixture, and works it round in his hands into the shape of a ball, squeezing all the time, so that the oil drips out freely. When as much oil as can come has been squeezed out, the puleleti is ready, and is rolled up in pandanus leaves and put away in a dry place. (I found the Funafuti rats thoroughly appreciated my store of puleleti.) A woman poured

off the oil that had been expressed, strained and scented it, and put it by to use as anointing oil.

Vatia (arrowroot) grows like a weed all over the island, and yet it is seldom used for food. When Tavaū pointed out the plant to me, I said, "palenti good kaikai"; and she explained to me that the natives knew the value of it as food, and liked it cooked into a pudding with lolo. I wondered why I had never seen it used, and she said, "Vatia good kaikai, too mochee work make cook." That was the secret of it; the trouble of scraping and washing the root to get the flour, and after that the bother of cooking it, were too much for the Funafutians, so unless they ran short of other food, or some sick person required it, they never cared to prepare arrowroot. Arrowroot is esteemed by them as a certain cure for dysentery.

I saw a goodly number of a pretty dracæna plant, called ti, growing among the cocoa-nut palms and arrowroot, in the centre of the main island. Tavaū explained that the root when cooked was "all a same a sooka" (sugar). I asked why it was not more used now, and she said it was a lot of trouble to plant and tend at first, and that when the roots were ready they had grown down very deep, and needed a great deal of heavy digging to get them up. For this reason the cultivation of ti is dying out, only two men, Opataia and Mareko, having plantations of it on the main islet. In old times it was much more cared for, and the people had periodical feasts for the digging, cooking, and eating of the sugary roots.

A very few thin, poor-looking rattans of sugar-cane are to be seen in various parts of the taro-gardens ; and the natives are much addicted to chewing the cane. They do not attempt to make sugar out of it.

The following is, I believe, a complete list of the plants used, cooked or raw, as foods in Funafuti :— Niu (cocoa-nut), fala (pandanus), ti (dracæna), vatia (arrowroot), kau (crow's-nest fern), taro, pulaka, and ikalavi (edible arums), futi (bananas), muniapelo (paw-paw), and mei fenua muli (bread-fruit).

The animal food consists chiefly of fish, pig, fowls, turtle, and a few wild sea-birds. The natives all shudder at the thought of eating fua-moa (hens' eggs), and seem to think the white people give way to a disgusting custom by doing so. But they had no scruple about selling eggs to us at a shilling a dozen. I never saw a native eat a fowl, but the trader said they liked them ; as, however, they could sell any number of fowls to the ships that came at two shillings per pair, they probably kept them more as merchandise than as food.

When we were camping on the uninhabited islets, our boatmen would occasionally net sea-birds ; these were roasted whole in their feathers, and very much relished.

Pork is highly esteemed. Pigs are roasted whole periodically, and every bit of the animal is eaten except the bones.

Fish is an almost constant article of diet, and the natives prefer it raw ; but it won't remain good in the

raw state, and when a large haul comes in it has to be cooked. The method of cooking is simple and satisfactory ; you take a fish just as it comes out of the water, inside, head, tail, skin, scales and all, and plait it up neatly in a few palm pinnules, and place it in the native oven, where it cooks in its own juices. When the fish is cooked you take off the plaited case, and the skin comes with it, and you can put your fish on a clean bread-fruit leaf, and pick off the moist white flesh with your fingers.

The nicest fish I ever ate in my life was cooked this way ; and Tili took it out of its case, picked off all the white flesh with his fingers, placed it on a bread-fruit leaf, and brought it to me, with his usual courtly bow. I was awfully hungry at the time, and never so much as thought of a fork.

If fish is wanted to keep for several days, it is cooked in this fashion first, then all the skin and bones are removed, and the flesh put out in the sun to dry. When prepared this way it needs Funafuti teeth and digestion to extract nourishment from it. Crabs are eaten in great numbers, not quite raw, but nearly so ; the correct thing is to stab the crab and throw it back downwards on a fire, leave it there just long enough to warm it through, without actually cooking it, then snatch it off, and eat it on the spot. I never mustered sufficient courage to taste a crab cooked this way, therefore cannot say if it is palatable or otherwise.

The native baskets (tabola), which the natives use for carrying food, are usually plaited quickly out of

half a green palm leaf. Although they look simple enough, I found it much more difficult to learn to make one of these than I did to plait a mat. My piccaninnies, who were very painstaking little teachers, at last succeeded in overcoming my stupidity on this point ; and the basket made by "te fafine" (the woman) was shown and laughed at all over the island. My piccaninnies would in about ten minutes make a rough tabola for carrying food in ; these were used once or twice, and then thrown away ; as were also the pretty little green leaf trays that the women sometimes made for carrying small fish. There was a stronger, more durable tabola, made of dried palm leaves, an extremely neat affair, but it had a keel, instead of a flat bottom, and so rolled over on its side unless propped up. A Niutao woman on the island made a basket in exactly the same way, but with its sides bulged out, so that it would stand up without propping.

As most of the cooking operations are so simple, and as so much of the food is eaten raw, the Funafuti women are not overworked with the cooking ; but white women will envy them, when I say that a Funafuti woman never has the unpleasant duty of washing up pots and pans, knives and forks, tumblers, plates, or dishes. Cocoa-nut shells and banana leaves are used as saucepans one day, and as firewood the next, for there is always abundance to be had ; a bread-fruit leaf is an æsthetic plate, and answers as a serviette at the same time ; scraps of cocoa-nut shell serve as spoons, and fingers make excellent forks.



The knife that is used in cooking is easily wiped on a leaf; while the shell scraper and the coral-slab grater can be thrown on the ground, and will be beautifully cleaned by the sun and rain before next cooking-day. No wonder Funafuti women can get plenty of time for rest.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### CLOTHES AND PLANTS

Now we have come to that interesting topic *clothes*. No Funafuti husband has to groan over dressmakers' or milliners' bills, every woman is her own dressmaker and milliner here.

In olden times the vegetable kingdom, as represented in Funafuti, supplied all the necessary and very picturesque clothing. Men, women, and children big enough to need clothes wore a leaf petticoat, and wreaths of leaves and flowers; the hair, thick and fluffy, was allowed to grow as long as it would, generally not much below the shoulder.

The favourite wreath for the hair, and a very effective one, was one plaited with alternate strips of orange and green; the green strips were small scraps of palm leaf, and the orange strips were the outer rind of the ripe segment of pandanus fruit.

Since the white trader has taken up his residence on the island, the natives are all keen to possess printed calico, though they have to pay a high price for flimsy goods with blinding colours. Three yards of print are sufficient to make a lava-lava, and as the natives do not think it necessary to hem the borders,

the garment is ready for use as soon as the three yards are cut off the roll. The strip of calico is twisted thrice round the waist so as to hang to the knee, and then fastened on one side of the waist by a knowing little twist and tuck-in. These bright-coloured lava-lavas are really very picturesque, when worn with garlands of flowers only. The men always look well on week-days, because they wear nothing but a lava-lava, or a native leaf petticoat. The women spoil themselves, even on week-days, by the hideous tiputas (bust cloths) they wear above the leaf petticoat or the lava-lava. These bust cloths are of various designs, the commonest being an oblong piece of print about a yard long by a quarter of a yard wide, with a hole, big enough to admit the head, cut in the centre. The tiputa hangs down like a handkerchief, back and front, and is blown about by every breeze, so it is absolutely useless as a covering; many of the women wear them rolled up like a string round their necks with the ends just hanging in front. The young girls really spend a great deal of time and trouble over making one of these hideous tiputas. They collect scraps of coloured print, cut them into varied shapes, and *appliqué* them on to the outside of the garment; pieces that are too small and frayed to sew on in this way are torn into narrow strips, and tacked all round the edge for fringe. Although the girls were very proud of bright crazy-work tiputas, they preferred a white embroidered chemise, and looked extremely well in it; the long, white tails, however, hanging outside struck one as ludicrous, and

I always longed to cut them off at the waist, so as to make them look like the pretty, short garment worn by many of the Fiji girls. This was a low-necked sleeveless blouse, not gathered in at the waist; it was perfectly decent, cool, and easy, and showed off the pretty shoulders and arms to perfection. I made a few of these for my pet girls in Funafuti, and they looked extremely well. The students of our party suffered agonies from suppressed laughter in church when the girls lifted their tiputas, waistless blouses, or chemises, and waved them up and down to send a good breeze underneath. I'm sure I longed to be able to manipulate my own dress in the same way. After church our men would imitate them, and laugh, and though the girls could not see the joke, they were soon too shy to fan themselves this way in public. The hideous Samoan gown is gaining favour in Funafuti; this is a long straight garment, like a badly-cut night-gown, high up to the neck, with long sleeves, the skirt reaching from the yoke to the heels. Not only is this ugly, but it is also comparatively expensive, as it takes about seven yards of material to make, and has the further disadvantage of being dirty and dangerous, especially if worn in the cook-house, where the floor constitutes both table and fireplace; the Samoan gown dips into the dirt and the food, and is more liable to catch fire than is the leaf petticoat. I noticed that the few women who wore them had a great deal of trouble with them, tucking them this way and that to try to keep them out of the way.

The women all admired lace and embroidery very much, but clucked and "tapa'ed" in horror, when told the price of such articles. They imitated embroidery by cutting holes in strips of white calico, but the raw edges of the holes soon frayed in a disappointing manner.

The men's Sunday upper garment was either a shirt, cinglet, or coat ; and a bright-coloured handkerchief knotted round the neck was considered very stylish. These garments were all purchased from the trader ready made, as were also the few pairs of trousers that walked abroad on Sundays. Herein, again, the Funafutians are behind the Niué men, who can cut out and make remarkably good trousers. Natives always walk well with an easy, free step, and consequently do not look so well in trousers as in the waist cloth.

Boots and shoes are not yet *de rigueur* in Funafuti ; the natives' feet are small and shapely, and the soles quite hard enough to walk on the sandy shore and roads without protection. The men can walk barefoot on the jagged coral reef when spearing fish, but if they have a long day on the reef they wear a rough sandal plaited out of cocoa-nut fibre.

Since it has been the fashion in Funafuti for men to cut their hair very short, men and boys are beginning to wear hats on occasions, even during the week ; they delight in being "all a same a white man masher." The tiny boys look very ugly with their little shaven heads ; but the girls are very proud of their thick, bushy crops of hair, and try to make their heads



A FINE CROP OF HAIR.

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look as big as possible. All the women wore their hair down until I arrived, and then they all began to make queer attempts at doing up their "back hair," some of them completely spoiling their appearance. Even the tiny girls tried to keep their hair twisted up, until I showed them the portrait of my two little daughters, immediately after which fringes and hanging locks were the fashion among the small girls.

At my afternoons "at home" in Funafuti the chief pleasures of the women were to examine my clothes, look at fashion plates, and see me do up my hair; and the refreshments that were liked best were sweets and ship biscuits.

I wondered if their interest in the fashion plates was prompted by the desire to obtain fresh patterns of clothes; but one afternoon a Nukulaelae woman (wife to a white man) was present, and after there had been a great chattering over the fashion plates, she turned to me, glanced quickly at my waist, and then pointed to the waist of a figure in the book, and said with great emphasis, "white woman palenti big fool, tie up belly all tight, bine-by no goody in-a-side!" I felt bound to defend my countrywomen, and explained that though the pictures were all made like that, only a very few English women were silly enough to squeeze themselves in that way. She explained to the other women, who nodded and hummed in a satisfied way, and after that the fashion plates were not so much in request.

The people, men, women, and children, were all very fond of decorating themselves with shell or bead



necklaces, but they always looked better in their floral wreaths.

Most of the hats worn by men in Funafuti were neatly plaited out of narrow strips of pandanus leaf; and as only a few women could make them well, their work was much in request. These leaf hats are extremely light and thin, and are therefore but little protection from the sun, and the slightest breeze will blow them away. On one occasion, when my husband was dredging on the ocean reef, his native hat was blown away. Tili, who had made him a present of this hat, immediately sprang overboard, swam after it, regardless of sharks, and brought it back in triumph. After that it was attached by a string guard. These hats are all very small in the crown, too small for the average white man, and are nearly all made on the same block. The only shaping appliance that the women use in making a hat is a small, smooth crown-block of hardwood. The rim they plait without any guide.

The Funafuti hats are not so well plaited as similar hats from the Gilbert Group; but even the Gilbert islanders cannot make them so well as can the women of Nuié. The white missionary's wife in Nuié always wears native hats, and has introduced pretty and more modern shapes, and has taught the women several ways of plaiting straw for sewn hats. Therefore the Nuié hats are of marketable value as hats, and not only as curios.

Although the tiny Tyrolese hat worn by the Funafuti women is an absurd-looking article, it is a very

ingenious piece of work. Tagasia (Opataia's wife) made one so that I could see how it was done, and I was astonished at the resourcefulness displayed in its manufacture, and the amount of labour it entailed. Tagasia pasted together scraps of newspaper so as to make a fairly thick sheet of cardboard, and this was left between flat mats for a day to dry. The shapes of the crown, sides, and rims were then cut out and sewn together. The sewing took a long time, and broke several needles; and the edges were then strengthened by palm-pinnule midrib sewn on as hat-wire.

The pastor's wife taught the girls to plait a pretty straw pattern, and many of the girls made plait enough for a hat for themselves, which they sewed into a small, rather high-crowned sailor hat. They could buy no flowers, feathers, ribbons, nor lace, with which to trim these hats, and so they frayed out some plait and bunched the wavy stuff into rosettes or aigrettes, and dyed them blue with Reckitt's blue, or red with the juice of the nonu root. So they had their favourite colours on the new hats—red, blue, and white straw trimmings. These straw hats were all made, after I had given away a dozen English straw hats, by the girls who were not fortunate enough to get one of mine, and were all finished in time to wear the Sunday before my departure. They were a great improvement on the pasteboard atrocities, but all the girls look much prettier without any hats at all.

They have no real straw on the island, and so the

girls make "straw" to plait by peeling the outer skin off the pulaka stalks, which is soaked and bleached, and when dry it makes a pretty delicate shiny "straw," which, however, soon loses its brightness. In Nuié the women make similar "straw" in the same way from sugar-cane and arrowroot leaves.

The rougher kinds of leaf petticoats were made from palm pinnules which had been soaked and dried. When the pinnule was dry and sufficiently matured the skin of the upper side would rip off easily, and formed a soft curly string, and it was this skin of which nearly all the women's petticoats (titi) were made. When the titi was needed for great occasions, a row of ribbons of dyed pandanus leaves, or of feathers, would be arranged round the waist, so as to flap over the outside of the petticoat as the wearer walked. The titi were very full and bunched out round the hips, and when the girls walked in them the slight up and down movement of the hips gave them a curious emu-like gait and appearance. The titi were always fastened by a string just big enough to go round the waist.

The men's petticoats (takai) were made on a different plan, and of different material, too, when needed for a gala dress. The ordinary working petticoat made of half palm pinnules was harsher and rougher than the titi, but the gala takai was a very fine kilt long enough to go two and a half times round the body, and had a plaited waist quite unlike the knotted arrangement in the titi. These gala takai were always made out of the beautiful,

creamy bast of the fo fafine tree — a lovely hibiscus bearing a cream-coloured flower with a ruby centre. The bast had to be stripped and soaked in the sea for many days, bleached in the sun for many more days, drawn piece by piece over the blunt edge of a knife to make it supple, then split up into strips of about a quarter of an inch wide, and put away in bundles.

The two native dyes used for colouring pandanus leaves for ornamenting titi, takai, or mats, were red, prepared from the root of the nonu, and black, prepared from the mangrove; but now that the natives can buy pitch from the trader, they use that for black dye, instead of troubling to extract the dye from the mangrove.

The preparation of the fala (pandanus) leaves for making and ornamenting petticoats was tedious. Peke took me through the whole process. To begin with, Peke, Sarai, Petise, and myself started off one afternoon, armed with long knives, in search of young pandanus trees. We selected healthy, strong, young plants about six feet high, not having yet shot up into the trunk stage. With the long knives we cut these down about six inches from the ground, leaving a row or two of old and damaged leaves on the stump; then we cut off about eighteen inches of the top of the stem, rejecting the young half-grown leaves at the top which were too immature for our purpose. Then came the delightful work of stripping the leaves from the centre of the stem; this needs great care, for pandanus leaves have strong saw-like margins, and

strong and saw-like also are the backs of the midribs, so that a jagged scratch from margin or midrib will prove very painful, even if it does not fester, as it is prone to do.

It is thought a good practical joke in Funafuti for a girl to saw an unsuspecting youth with a pandanus leaf: a good deal of laughter on the one side and volubility on the other is the usual result of this joke.

When we had collected as many pandanus leaves as we could carry, we took them into the village where Famerea, Tanei's wife, had made a good blazing fire, and through the fire we drew all the pandanus leaves a few at a time. The leaves thus treated became supple, and the saw-like back and edges were softened so as to be quite harmless.

The leaves were then put into the lagoon to soak for a week or more, and they were taken out and spread on the sand in the sun to dry and bleach; this part of the work should not be hurried, or the leaves will shrink after they are plaited, and spoil your mats.

When the leaves are well shrunk and bleached and dried, you have to peel off the saw-like margin and back, and then draw the leaves backwards and forwards round a stake stuck in the ground; this makes them flat, smooth, and supple. They are then rolled up in neat balls, and stuck between a rafter and the thatch of a hut until they are wanted.

Pandanus leaves required for thatching are treated in exactly the same way, except that the saw-like

edges are allowed to remain on, and they are left in flat ribbons instead of being rolled up into balls.

The actual plaiting of the mats is very simple : there is but one pattern, the common crossed pattern, used, and the only difference between the coarse and the fine mats is the difference in the width of the strips of leaf used in the plaiting. The patterns are made by laying coloured strips over the ordinary crossed pattern, and do not increase the difficulty of the plaiting in the least.

The mats from some of the other islands in the Ellice Group, also from the Gilbert Group, are much better made than those from Funafuti. The Samoan, Fiji, and Nuié mats are a much better class of goods also ; in fact, the Funafuti mats are the poorest of any island mats I have ever seen.

The Funafuti children taught me how to make mats, and were much amused at my awkwardness. It is very trying indeed to a white woman to sit cross-legged on a coral pebble floor for any length of time, and holding down ends of fala leaves with a big toe is an utter impossibility. The children laughed frankly at my efforts, and then tried to soothe my wounded vanity by saying reassuringly, " Bine-by, te fafine palagi make palenti good mat."

Mats stand in the place of night-clothes and bedding to the natives, only very coarse mats made of palm leaves ever being used for floor mats to be walked on. A native's preparation for bed is a very simple one. He takes off his clothes, rolls himself up in a mat, and places his head on a

wooden oblong stool with very short legs, which does duty as a pillow. Since the advent of the trader all the natives indulge in mosquito screens, very few of which are made of real mosquito netting. Most of them are pieces of calico, plain or printed, sewn into flat-topped tents about six feet long and three feet high, and about two feet wide. These were rolled up during the day and tucked away on a rafter, and were let down by strings at night, thus separating the hut into several tiny compartments with calico walls. I never could understand how the people managed to breathe under these dreadful screens. The mosquito-nets were not washed too often, nor were they hung up straight, and the interior of each hut at night presented a very untidy and squalid appearance.

I must not close the chapter on clothing without mentioning the oil used so frequently for anointing the hair and the body, and the scents used to make this oil pleasant to the nostrils of the natives.

Although the natives like the smell and the taste of kerosene, they have not yet gone so far as to use it as a scent. They always rub their hair and skins with scented cocoa-nut oil, the preparation of which is rather tedious, but interesting. Peke and I made some scented oil one day, and it took us an entire morning. First of all we flaked the hard kernel of old cocoa-nuts, then we squeezed out the white juice (lolo), and this lolo was put into cocoa-nut-shell saucepans and boiled over a hot-stone fire. After the lolo had boiled a certain length of time it suddenly

separated into oil and white curds; the shell was then whipped off the fire and its contents strained into another shell. The strainer was again supplied ready-made by the miraculous cocoa-nut palm. We stripped off the coarse, cast-off sheaths of the leaves, which hang round the stems like stiff bagging, and found that it made an excellent strainer. Having strained the oil clear of the white curds we had to scent it, and we did this by throwing fresh green leaves of a fern called maili, and of a shrub called valo-valo, into the boiling oil, till all the scent was extracted from them; then we finished up by throwing in pieces of the skeletons of the pulaka leaves—leaves that had had all the green rotted off them by being buried in mud, and then dried in the sun. When these ingredients had been well stirred and boiled into the oil for about five minutes, the oil was again strained, then cooled, and bottled for use.

This oil is clear, but has a queer, stifling smell, not at all a European's notion of toilet scent; but the natives delight in it, and rub themselves lavishly with it on sing-sing nights.

They have another method of preparing cocoa-nut oil to burn in their lamps. The kernels of old nuts are flaked and put out in the sun, then squeezed and kneaded in a kumete day after day until all the oil runs out. Whenever I saw a kumete full of this evil-smelling, dirty-looking stuff, I got on the windward side of it with all expedition.

The cocoa-nut palm, as I have already remarked, is a miraculous tree; it supplies food, drink, cord, bait,



thatch, mats, oil for lamps, anointing oil, firing, saucepans, bottles, plates, spoons, brushes, and clothing. The old dry leaves that fall with a warning swish—mind you get out of the way when you hear one coming, for it is heavy enough to stave in a strong boat—are gathered by the girls and bound into “lama” (torches), and used in the canoe-fishing on dark nights. The tiny rootlets that grow at the base of the stems are often used to help in the making of fish-traps, and the hollow trunks of veteran trees make roomy tanks for the rain water. In fact every part of the tree is used in some wonderful and eminently satisfactory way, and knowing its value as a food-bearer, I was astonished to see a magnificent tall, straight specimen cut down while in full flower to help in building a new house.

This indicates the value of building-timber. Trees used only for their timber are not plentiful, and least of all on the main islet, so that sometimes valuable palms have to be sacrificed thus. The trees used only for their timber grow chiefly on the other islets, and it is quite a week's business to go over in boats, cut down trees, and float them across to the main islet. Every kind of tree that grows on the atoll is used for building purposes, although durable hardwoods like kanava, fetau, and milo are preferred: hardwood trees are not common, and are used for making tuai, kumete, tuki-tuki, pillows (luuga), boxes (turuma), axe-handles, fish-hooks, husking sticks, etc., etc.; so when a man wants to build a hut or a cook-house he has to build it of what he can get—not of

the best materials for the purpose. In one hut I have seen posts, beams, and rafters made of all the different hardwoods, and palm, pandanus, pua, mangrove, and valovalo into the bargain.

The soft light wood of the puka tree is reserved for the building of canoes. The short, scrubby tree called gie (pronounced "ngia") produces small branches of beautiful hardwood. This is not large enough for building, but makes very tough and durable tuki-tuki, fish-hooks, and huskers. The smaller pieces of gie make excellent firewood, but the natives prefer using cocoa-nut husks and shells for this purpose. They used to supply gie, cut in two-foot lengths, at the rate of ten shillings a ton, for the furnace of the boiler belonging to the diamond drill. The only drawback to the use of this as fuel was that while the average diameter of the sticks was three inches, about one-third of this was sodden bark and wet moss. It burned very well, however, when thoroughly dried. The pliable roots of the toga (mangrove) are also in great request; in fact the trees are so few in number and varieties that the natives have learned to make use of every part of most of them—root, stem, bark, sap, branches, leaves, and fruit.

Next to the cocoa-nut palm the most useful tree on the atoll was the fala (pandanus). There are two varieties of this tree; one called fala vao, which is self-sown, and springs up everywhere from the cast-away chewed segments of the fruit. The pandanus is even more marvellous in its feeding than the

cocoa-nut palm, for it seems able to extract sufficient nourishment from solid rock and the air alone. The fala vao looked exactly like its cultivated cousin, the fala kai, except at fruiting time, then the cone of the fala kai is twice the size of that of the fala vao, and much more juicy. The edible seeds of the fala are not eaten in Funafuti; the natives wait until the segments of the cone have turned a bright orange colour, then they pull them apart, and chew the pointed end; the square end containing the seeds is thrown away, and this accounts for the number of young fala plants that are seen springing up in every direction.

The natives were very fond of chewing pandanus fruit, and the hermit crabs esteemed it a dainty also; I tried it one day, but it was like slightly sweetened gum-arabic, and I did not repeat the experiment.

The fala kai, which is planted and cultivated, is private property, and only the man who owns it has a right to the fruit of it, but the fala vao is common property, and anyone can help himself to the fruit or leaves, no matter upon whose land the plant may grow. The children generally keep their eyes on a ripening pandanus cone, and when it is declared fit to eat, a dozen youngsters will share the booty. As fala leaves are so constantly in request for making hats or mats, it is a great boon to the poorer women that the plant is free.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ANIMALS

WE had been told that there were no land birds in Funafuti, except on one islet, where was to be seen on rare occasions a pigeon, "probably new to science." The man who told us this said the bird was so dreadfully shy that it was quite impossible to get near it, and that was why he had not bagged one. Of course the first thing to be done was to get one of those pigeons, so we landed on the islet celebrated for these shy birds, and Mr. Woolnough, one of our students, brought down a specimen with his first shot before we had been ashore many minutes. After this the pigeons sensibly made themselves scarce, and we had to content ourselves with this solitary unfortunate one. The poor bird scattered its tail-feathers, and the gun scattered some shot over my husband and myself, but these were mere trifles. The tail-feathers were collected, and they and the bird consigned to the methylated spirit tub, there to await fame.

There were no other land birds on the atoll, and the cocoa-nut groves were strangely silent, for there was no twittering of small birds, no piping of cicadas or other noisy insects, whilst even the mosquitoes

were not so noisy as our Sydney ones, but they made up for that in venom.

The Funafuti mosquitoes (*namu*) in numbers and venom excel any others of the genus that I have had the felicity of meeting. One of these delightful little creatures would make the whole night an agony, and the only way to secure immunity from them was to take a scrap of candle and matches into bed, tuck in the mosquito net carefully all round, and then deliberately hunt and kill *very* dead every mosquito that had been smart enough to accompany one inside. We each had a narrow bunk to sleep in, and in the *abandon* of sleep an elbow or a knee would frequently come in contact with the net, and then all the mosquitoes that could possibly find hold hung on to that knee or elbow through mosquito net and night-gown, and in the morning that portion of one's anatomy would look as if it had a flourishing attack of native itch.

We had been prepared, by the naughty inaccuracy of rumour, for sand-flies as well as mosquitoes, but we were spared this added woe, and the trader assured me that sand-flies were unknown in the island.

The common house-fly was a great pest during the daytime on the lagoon side of the islet, but our camp, on the ocean side, was generally freshened by a breeze from the ocean strong enough to drive the flies away. They worried us not at all, except on a still day, but even then the mass of them were disinclined to leave the lagoon side, where the natives afforded them such sumptuous banqueting grounds.

I never once saw a blow-fly, nor were there any

horrors in the shape of large biting ants. The ants were small black things that tried to spoil our sugar and jam, and even made occasional raids on the butter-tin.

The white ant swarmed everywhere, and ate everything wooden that was left on the ground for a few days. They even worked their soft bodies through into the solid core-boxes and tried their skill on the hard coral core, but here they were unsuccessful; the core that had frequently smashed powerful machinery was too much even for the white ant. The Funafuti white ants are like malicious dwarfs; they do not confine their attentions to cut timber or dead wood, they must needs eat out the hearts of live cocoa-nut palms, and many a fine palm has fallen a victim to their depredations.

More than one variety of cockroach (loga-loga) has been introduced into the island, and these unpleasant and mischievous creatures increase and multiply here as they do elsewhere, only more so. I once saw a specimen four inches long, and said so, but my statement was received with the cold silence of distrust. There was not time to collect that specimen to convince the unbelievers.

There were numbers of sweet, little, fly-hunting lizards, green and gold and grey, jolly little things that made themselves quite at home in our huts, and hunted most industriously for what seemed at best a precarious livelihood, for flies are *very* "fly" in Funafuti. They could make rapid and long jumps too, and yet one often saw the fly sail away, and the lizard look out at the corner of one eye to see

if anyone noticed his failure. They were considerate little creatures, and very seldom fell into one's plate or cup at meal times ; but I grieve to say that several were consigned to the spirit tub. They do say that the ancestors of these dear little creatures came over concealed among the vegetable food brought by the Tongan Vikings when they raided Funafuti.

Spiders large and spiders small frequented the thickets, and many and long and tough were the ropes they spun to trap unwary travellers.

Many a moth too delivered up its small body to be burnt at our lamps, and little brown flies hovered in crowds over our fruit and food. The collection of tiny winged creatures strewn round our lamps every night, would probably have rejoiced the heart of an entomologist.

Hundred-leggers there were also, but they were heavy with sleep, and had stowed themselves away comfortably in unsuspecting corners, so that we bottled very few specimens.

I was very much on the alert to keep all our vegetable food from the depredations of the native rat (kimoa), a reddish-grey little fellow, very little bigger than an English mouse, who had been reported to me in Sydney as a strict vegetarian. He certainly liked banana and taro, but only when he could not get flesh food. The little rascal made such inroads on my fish, turtle, meat, and eggs, that I had very little compunction about setting a trap for him. Several were among the creatures which met their fate in the spirit tub. One was caught in a trap standing

close by a bough of bananas ; one of his fellows came round to see what was amiss, and at once began to eat his comrade's flank, completely ignoring the adjacent bananas. In olden times the rats were such a pest that the king ordered each native to catch a certain number of rats every night before retiring to rest. If any rat-catcher slept while at his work, his neighbours facetiously stole his rats to make up their tale.

The Funafutians have never been rat-eaters, and shudder at the suggestion.

The natives keep cats, pigs, and poultry, and the pigs are the pets. Every native child likes a sucking-pig as a pet, and cuddles it affectionately just as a white child cuddles a kitten ; but when this pet has developed into a well-grown pig, there is no stupid sentiment about eating it. The whole populace, including tiny children, will watch the killing and dressing of a pig with lively interest ; and when one is taken out of a native oven, shedding fat and bilious odours, the happy owner is followed into his hut by a crowd of admiring friends, and when the cooked pig is deposited on a mat on the floor of a hut, guests, invited and otherwise, natives and flies, settle on to it, and "settle it" in no time. Each man, with his unwashed hand, tears off a limb, and eats it without knife or fork, eats solidly through crackling, fat and muscle, dripping lard from the corners of his mouth, and in a few minutes a very well-picked bone goes flying out of the hut. To do the natives justice they don't eat puaka (pig) often ; on certain occasions a number of pigs are slaughtered and cooked, when



a great feast is held in honour of something or other, and men, women, and children eat to repletion. There were three puaka feasts while I was in Funafuti, and they cost me in my capacity of nurse and doctor many a long, hot walk, and several bottles of cascara and Dover tabloids. The sugar-coated tabloids were much in favour with the natives, and after pig feasts they both needed and deserved them.

Pussy is a harmless, cocoa-nut fed, thin, melancholy creature in Funafuti; the climate makes her indolent, and she does not keep down the native rat in a very satisfactory manner.

The fowls are a miserable-looking set, most of them a mixed edition of that specially ugly breed of fowls which has its feathers turned the wrong way. They are scraggy, and thin, and despondent-looking; the cocoa-nut gratings on which they chiefly subsist do not agree with them, or else the climate is too moist and hot for fowls. There was one peculiarity about these fowls that puzzled me considerably, and that was that they laid eggs with the chicken already formed inside. There can be no mistake about this, because I constantly asked for "new-born" eggs, and in almost every case there was a chick inside. When there was no chick, the egg was addled. This interesting discovery of mine was explained by Tanei, an intelligent half-caste; he said it was the climate! I am not sure but that this startling piece of information is "new to science." If so, give Tanei the honour.

Some folks deplore the want of singing birds,

sand-flies, bullamacow (oxen), and *bow-wows* in Funafuti, but to my mind the ubiquitous crab more than compensates for the lack of these interesting creatures. There are ocean crabs, reef crabs, land crabs, crabs of all sizes, shapes, and colours, crabs Brobdingnagian and crabs Lilliputian, crabs long and crabs broad, crabs all legs and crabs all body, crabs grey, red, yellow, brown, and drab, crabs up every tree, in the thatch of every hut, under every rotten leaf or stem, crabs in the earth beneath, and crabs in the waters under the earth. They go everywhere and do everything, except fly. All the energy that the men of Funafuti ought to have and have not, seems to have been borrowed by the crabs. They walk and climb day and night, especially night. They examine minutely every scrap of land and vegetation daily, and are the cheapest and most conscientious scavengers imaginable. If you throw down a chewed segment of pandanus fruit and "lie low" for a few seconds, you will suddenly become aware that the earth round that bit of pandanus fruit is moving; you rub your eyes and stare, and, behold! it is not the ground moving, but merely a host of hermit crabs on the march to the discarded piece of food; and in a few minutes there will be nothing of it left but the hard nut and dry fibre.

The crab is a true scientific explorer, he inspects everybody and everything minutely, and is not content with a single or rapid survey of any object. One felt quite on one's best behaviour with all those protruding, critical crab-eyes levelled at one.

Fortunately for us most of the crabs were timid and fled in all directions at the sound of a booted foot-step. The hermit crabs, as soon as ever they heard this, would draw back into their shells and roll down the rocks like a small hail-storm, and they would lie as if dead till the sound of the steps had ceased. Hermit crabs have not imbibed the new morality of Funafuti, for they are shameless cannibals and impudent thieves.

I had collected a rather nice set of shells from the lagoon reef to take home to my children. These shells were left in a basket on the floor of my hut while I sat down to recover from the exertion of gathering them. Soon I heard a scratching and scrambling noise in the neighbourhood of this basket, and looking round I saw a number of hermit crabs undressing themselves, backing into or running off with my pretty whole shells, leaving me their discarded, battered shelters behind them. After a few seconds of surprised stillness I made a dash for the thieves, but succeeded in capturing only about half of my collection. Then I replaced these in the basket, and smiled grimly as I considered how I would "do" these audacious robbers. I tied a piece of muslin, tightly stretched and securely fastened, over the top of the basket, and sat down to watch the expected defeat of the crabs. Very soon the hermits returned, and after a brief survey of the situation deliberately set to work to tear the muslin; it took them a long time, but they persevered, and I remained quiet; their claws reduced the muslin to shreds, and the crabs

walked off triumphantly with the rest of my shells. I did not interfere this time.

I never did like crabs, and after three months' intimate acquaintance with many varieties in Funafuti I find my aversion to them has distinctly increased. The nastiest thing you can imagine is to have a square foot of squashed crab to clean off your best Sunday mat. I know, because I had to do it. It was this way. I used to give the native pastor English lessons in my hut twice a week between 8 and 10 p.m., just the witching hour at which the night crabs begin to prowl. The pastor and I used to put a lamp on the floor and sit tailor-wise beside it (I did not learn this attitude young, and found it hurt), bending over a Samoan and English Bible respectively. Whether the crabs, like the native pastor, yearned after more learning, I don't know, but I do know that they were always more in evidence on these than on any other occasions. I used to get the creeps at their projecting eyes, long legs, and unsteady gait, and when an extra large one came and fixed me with a goggly stare, I could not repress a shudder. Thereupon the native pastor chivalrously brought his convincing hand down on that crab, when crack! squelch! Oh, horror!

I asked the trader and the natives if there were any giant robber-crabs on the atoll, and they replied cheerfully that there were heaps of them, and that they stole cocoa-nuts. They never brought me a specimen, nor did I see anything in the shape of a crab-guard except on one tree, on which I saw a sheet of

tin tied down about half-way up the stem. I concluded that they said there were plenty just to please me.

It is a curious sight to see a grave and reverend land-crab stiffly and deliberately scooping out the kernel of a drinking cocoa-nut, and delicately conveying the snowy morsels to his mouth. Everything with a mouth eats cocoa-nut in Funafuti—ants, rats, cats, sea-birds and fowls, crabs, pigs, piccaninnies and adult humans; and if natural historians will not permit me to say that the lizards, flies, and mosquitoes do so also, I will merely remark that they pretend they do, and pretend it very cleverly. I never inquired if the fish affected a cocoa-nut diet, but they probably do.

Talking about fish, now, Funafuti has a splendid assortment, from a tiny fish of azure blue, only about one inch long, up to grandfather sharks and fabulous palu. Many of the fish were brilliantly coloured, even of the edible kinds, and many were poisonous. It was never safe to eat fish without first consulting a native. The natives often brought us horrors of the finny deep, and warned us solemnly that they were “no good kaikai”; these were brought as specimens for the spirit tubs. A common present for breakfast was a dozen garfish on a bread-fruit leaf.

The natives spear fish very cleverly, though their spears are anything but effective-looking weapons. The handle of a fishing-spear is about two and a half yards long, and at its business end are fastened two iron prongs, about two inches apart, with barbs pointing outwards and away from the tips. The natives

poise these lightly and easily, and will frequently spear a dozen fish in half an hour. They spear anything that comes within range, whether edible or not, and they frequently spear baby sharks which come on to the reef quite close to the shore.

The lagoon as well as the ocean is full of sharks, but the natives are apparently not in the least afraid of them; and the trader said that during his forty years' residence on the island only two men had been taken by the sharks. When the last man was taken, some of the natives went out in a boat and waited round till they caught that shark, or his proxy. I used to bathe by moonlight alone on the reef, until I found that sharks often came up to within a few yards of the shore; after which I preferred to bathe in company with a score of shouting, splashing, yelling amphibious piccaninnies.

The natives were much more afraid of a Portuguese man-o'-war than of a shark, and if the harmless-looking blue cable of one of these queer creatures happened to twine itself round an oar that a native was holding, that native would leave hurriedly.

The bonito fishing is the great event of the year. For the bonito season the whole island moves, bag and baggage, to one of the southernmost islets (Funafala) where there is a collection of permanent huts, and a church on almost as magnificent a scale as that in Funafuti. Here the women make copra, and prepare fala leaves for mats and thatching, while the men go into the open ocean fishing for bonito. Bonito fish-hooks are extremely pretty, made of pearl

shell and feathers. One hook, I was told, takes a man three weeks to shape out of a shell. I was not told how many hours per day a man would feel disposed to grind the shell. A Funafuti man could easily take a year to make a hook at the rate I usually saw him working.

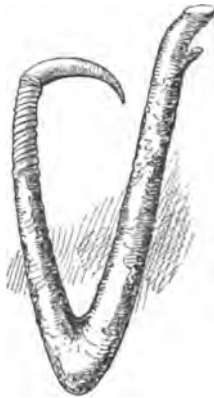
They say that no bait is used in bonito fishing, but the bright-feathered hook is poised above the water, and occasionally flapped on the surface, so that the bonito, trusting to its eyesight only, leaps out of the water to meet its fate.

There was one particular fish that the natives were extremely fond of talking about, they were monstrously proud of it, and they called it a palu. I collected a lot of information about the palu. Here it is. The palu is a deep-sea fish; it can only be caught in a special kind of calm weather; very few men are clever enough to catch it; it needs a line 200 fathoms long to catch it; only one particular sort of wooden hook will catch it; no bait is needed; you just have to let your hook down about 200 fathoms, and if there is a palu handy he will swallow the hook and swim up complacently to tell you so; he kicks a little bit, not much though, when you try to take him on board your boat; he is six feet long; he is dark grey in colour, and smooth-skinned; one of him will feed the whole village, three hundred mouths, for a week; and so on.

By the time we had collected all this information about the palu, our biologist said "it was new to science." I knew he would, but thought the

conclusion justifiable this time. Palu hooks are cut solidly out of a very tough hardwood, are eight inches long, and nearly four inches wide in the widest part, are difficult to shape and to lash on to a line, and the trouble they cost the natives to make induced me to think that the natives really believed in palu. But then they offered palu-hooks for sale at one dollar a pair, and I hardened into unbelief again.

The men on our scientific staff were very keen to secure a palu, and spent nearly all meal-times in planning and discussing how to bottle a palu when they got him. One man bagged the empty meat-casks, and talked seriously about the advisability of cutting up and pickling the palu in brine, and ordered all the meat-casks to be opened in such a way as to spill half the brine, so that the lids should not be injured. Another man said that the head and skin would be enough to guide the scientist who would have the describing of his palu, and he meant just to pickle the head in a kerosene tin, and dry the skin. Our biologist said he thought he could manage to keep a palu if once he had it. But no palu was ever forthcoming while we were on the island. We did not offer a reward for a palu, which was a mistake. Had we offered, say five dollars, for a palu, and still one was not to be had, then we should



PALU HOOK.



have been justified in saying boldly that the palu was to be found only in the fevered imagination of a Funafutian.

But we heard of the palu again at Nuié, and then a missionary told us a few more wonderful stories about it, but it wasn't quite like the Funafuti one.

Fish generally in Funafuti have a bad time of it ; they are hooked, speared, netted, and trapped, and yet in spite of all these drawbacks they manage to increase and multiply exceedingly.

The native fish-traps are cunningly devised of lattice-work made of tiny, tough twigs, lashed together by fine sinnet (native cord) ; they have a front entrance left invitingly open, and a back door not intended for the use of the fish. This basket-trap is let down into the lagoon, and acts as a sorting machine as well as a trap, because all the useless, small fish can slip easily through the meshes of the lattice-work, and any big fish who saunters in on an exploring expedition is not likely to get out again. This method of fishing just suits the natives, because the trap can be left until they feel sufficiently energetic to go and haul it up, and the fish feed and fatten while they wait.

The natives were extremely generous to us in the matter of giving us fish, but the supply was irregular ; we sometimes had more than we could eat while it was fresh, and then for days we were without any fish at all. So one of our party said he was going to be independent, and make a trap of his own of wire netting, and he should put it down in the lagoon

and paddle off in his canoe any time our camp wanted fish, and there it would be. We all thought this an excellent idea, and watched the making of the trap with great interest. It looked very well when it was finished, and we were all very glad when it was put into the lagoon, and already fancied ourselves in possession of a regular and punctual supply of fresh fish daily. The natives had watched the making of this fish-trap too, but they said nothing till it was finished; then one of them said quietly, "‘e no cats fiss." This was a damping remark, but the quiet assurance of our manufacturer’s manner restored confidence, and we waited hopefully. We waited all the rest of the time, and sure enough "‘e no cats fiss." We avoided the subject of fish and fish-traps after the first two weeks of waiting.

Every boy and girl on the island liked to possess a fishing-line, and hooks were in great request as presents or barter. They liked to get twelve fish-hooks for one egg, but we refused to deal on those terms, especially after a week’s experience in the purchasing of eggs.

Net-fishing from a canoe by torch-light looked so romantic and picturesque as seen from the shore, that I could not rest until I had taken part in it.

So one moonless night Opataia placed his canoe at my service, Lua brought his fishing net (a small netted bag, like a strong butterfly net, affixed to the end of a long slender pole), Tavaū made a bundle of torches and came as torch-bearer, Falaoa came to paddle the canoe, little Nemei was bailer, and I was just dead weight.

We were a very merry party as we pushed off and paddled to where the torches were flashing in canoes already at work. We were soon in the thick of it, surrounded by other canoes darting about in all directions, torches flashing, natives shouting and laughing, and nets whirling and splashing. The method of it was this: you start dry, with a good bundle of torches (lama) across the platform made by the outrigger; everybody laughs and chatters for a few minutes, except the one who paddles. He is looking out for the fish, and suddenly he shouts, and the man with the net springs "for'ard," whirls his net, and brings it down with a dexterous dab and a twist; the girl with the torch springs up at the same instant, waves her torch like a maniac, scattering a thick shower of sparks and glowing scraps of charcoal over the whole company; the canoe rocks recklessly, and is made to shoot about in a dozen directions in as many minutes, and consequently begins to fill with water which simply streams in at the sewn joints; the bailer bails furiously, and you help all you can for fear of a swamping, only stopping occasionally to flick off about two inches of red-hot charcoal which the torch-bearer playfully drops on you. Just as you congratulate yourself that the water is decreasing, the man with the net lands a fish in your eye, and the bailer looks at another canoe and inadvertently empties the scoop into your lap instead of over the side. This alternation of pleasant little surprises goes on till you are scorched in several places, wet through, half

blinded by the flashing torches, and till all the torches are burnt out. Then you count the fish, if they are not too numerous, the canoe is paddled back in the dark to the shore, and you bail and sing alternately, and pretend you have had an awfully good time.

I only went torch-fishing once. But I was ambitious to catch fish, and determined to try line-fishing. I borrowed a line, according to the custom in Funafuti, and nearly got a sunstroke in collecting hermit crabs for bait. After two hours' exciting work at extracting the wary hermits, I induced a native boy to show me how to fix on the bait Funafuti fashion. I carefully followed his instructions for several days, but caught nothing. Then I sought that boy's help again, and he again fixed the bait for me, and even threw the line and caught a plump little fish at once to show me how easy it was. So I tried again, got any number of bites, but no fish. Then I patiently held the line and watched the fish. The water was clear and shallow, and the fish were numerous, beautiful, and cautious without being timid. They always did the same thing; they swam up to the surface, blew a little bubble, looked quickly at me, spoke reassuringly to each other, and then started on the bait. They made dainty little nibbles and sharp little tugs, and always fetched the whole thing off without touching the hook, quarrelled over and ate it. On one occasion I landed two small fish, but they were not of an edible variety; and once I hooked a large fish and in great excitement hauled

him ashore, where he turned a back somersault, and dragged the line over my finger, cutting it to the bone. This was painful, and I danced round and used expressions that would have shocked a missionary; in the meantime the fish got away, carried with him the hook and more than half the borrowed line. I borrowed another line and several hooks, and began fishing again. I worked like this for a week, and caught several loose chunks of coral, but never a fish, and having lost all the hooks and the second line I gave up. After this when the natives enquired, with a beaming smile slightly tempered with slyness, when I meant to "make fiss" again, I used to reply airily, "me palenti work now; bine-by me make fiss."

Except the creatures already mentioned, and a few sea-birds, I saw no other animals on the island. There were neither fleas nor snakes, and to one who has camped out in the Australian bush this was something to marvel over.

Dogs and goats were both introduced into the island years ago. Dogs met their fate for reasons which I have elsewhere specified; goats made such ravages in the taro gardens that the natives, who do not understand fencing, were driven to convert them all into *kaikai* (food).

Once upon a time a trading vessel called in at Funafuti with a real live horse on board, and the entire native population went off in their canoes to see the wonderful *solofanua*, as they called it. One small boy, to whom I showed the picture of a horse, got tremendously excited; his eyes started out, and

he simply *yelled* "Solofanua! Solofanua!! Solofanua!!!"

The reading books supplied to the mission school are furnished with pictures of strange animals, such as lions and monkeys, and an amusing story is told by Captain Hore, of the L. M. Society's ship *John Williams*, of the excitement the sight of a sheep on his ship caused among the natives. The sheep in question was in a pen, and one native caught sight of it, stared, and started back with the usual exclamation, "Tapa!" He called his comrades, and then all came to look, creeping cautiously, with wide-open eyes of terror, and tumbled back on each other in a panic if the poor sheep did but move. The captain could not make out why the people were so scared, but after some questioning discovered that the natives thought this strange animal was the lion (leona), a picture of which they had seen in their school primers!

## CHAPTER XIX.

### UNINHABITED ISLETS

FUNAFUTI is the main islet of the atoll, and on it the natives live for about nine months in the year ; for the remaining three months most of them live in Funafala, one of the southernmost islets. They carry with them all their belongings (not an overpowering mass of luggage) to Funafala, and make themselves fairly comfortable for the extended picnic. They have a permanent village of good huts there and a church, and they spend their working time in fishing for bonito, and in making copra. This plan gives the people a change of scene, a slight change of air, and a distinct change of work, and the taro gardens on the main island get a much-needed rest. Funafala is well planted, with cocoa-nuts chiefly ; there are only one or two bread-fruit trees and no taro or ikalaoi (a large variety of edible arum) patches. The chief foods, therefore, during these months must be fish and cocoa-nut ; but on Sundays the natives indulge in lau-kau, *i.e.*, the curled tips of the young fronds of a crow's-nest fern, cooked in lolo. This crow's-nest fern, kau, grows all over the islets in great abundance, and I have seen fronds of it four

feet long and a foot wide ; but that was only on one islet, where the soil was enriched with pumice and guano. On the main islet the largest fronds seldom reached more than two feet in length.

There are ruins of a fine coral cement church in Funafala ; one side and the roof of it were destroyed by a hurricane a few years ago. I don't wonder that the natives have not summoned up sufficient energy to repair it ; the wonder is they were ever industrious enough to build it. Fancy two large, well-built churches on one atoll, and only two hundred and seventy-five inhabitants. They have run up a very airy hut for the services now, a lovely place for worship on a fine day. On a wet one the Sabbath garments would come to grief. The other islets have no permanent huts, nothing but half a dozen palm-leaf shelters on those islets nearest the fishing grounds. These shelters are used by the natives when they land to cook the fish before bringing it back to the main islet.

The islets are of various shapes and sizes, and are all covered with vegetation, except the smallest islet, which is just a patch of coral reef above high-water mark, supporting two miserable-looking cocoa-nut palms.

That pretty story we learnt as children about drifting cocoa-nuts landing on a newly-emerged reef, and straightway sprouting and growing, and gradually dropping a flourishing family of palmlets round it, is a fairy-tale it seems. The natives laugh at the notion of a self-raised cocoa-nut, and declare that their forefathers planted all the old trees, and that they have



planted all the young ones. A cocoa-nut tree needs tender nursing during the first years of its life.

The day on which we visited the smallest islet the sea was rather rough, and as the reef close in to the islet was an extra tricky one, our boatmen got out and walked up to their waists in the water, guiding the boat through the surf towards the shore; occasionally they slipped off a ledge of coral, and disappeared for an instant, to the great amusement of the rest of the party. We could not get very close to the shore, so Opataia took my husband on his shoulders and walked through the surf with him. He got just as wet as if he had walked, for the surf was heavy, but he got ashore much quicker than he would have done had he tried floundering through on his own feet. I could see every inch of this islet from the boat, and it was not inviting, so I elected to remain in the boat, which was dancing recklessly about in the surf. My husband solemnly paced the patch, took levels, eyed a few pieces of coral rubble knowingly, made a few notes in a book, and then looked happy. The people watched him respectfully, and when he had finished, Opataia, with great gravity, planted a sprouting cocoa-nut he had brought with him, and called it Tavita (David), in honour of the learned one. Did he think that Tavita might have brought fruitfulness to that barren spot by walking over it and muttering to his strange instruments? A geologist, if he's not a fool in the eyes of a native, must be a devil-man (magician).

One islet, Fuafatu, has the dearest little boat-cove

imaginable; the chief difficulty about it is that the entrance is only just wide enough to let a small boat through, and if you do not hit that tiny passage your boat and you are doomed, for the surf is strong and the reef jagged, and if by a miracle you escaped being dashed to pieces on the reef, you would be carried across it to drift about on the open Pacific, out of the track of vessels. I shall not easily forget that boat-cove, because of my manner of arriving there. It was in this way. The survey party that went there started when I was bound to remain to nurse a sick man, and I was therefore left behind on the main islet. My patient rapidly recovered, and just as I was reviling my luck because of missing this trip, I saw one of the boats, that had taken the party to Fuafatu, returning. I ran down to the landing-place, and was told that they had come back for more ropes for a dredging excursion on the morrow, and that they intended returning that very night as soon as the moon rose. I determined to go with them. The moon was hidden by clouds, and did not appear at the right time; I went down, however, to the boat, and found that Opataia (who was in command as usual on these trips) was asleep, and no one seemed thinking of making a start. I put this down to the "bine-by" policy of the natives, and ruthlessly roused Opataia to ask him when he meant to start, as I was going with him. He looked at me, and then at the sky, and across the lagoon, and then placidly gave orders to the boatmen to get ready, and we set sail about 9.30 p.m. There were a few stars peeping, just

enough for Opataia to steer by ; he always smiled in a kindly, pitying way when we mentioned a compass. I asked him what he would do if all the stars were hidden, he gravely emitted the noun "taula" (anchor!)

The murkiness of the night was weirdly pleasant while we were under the shelter of the island on the lagoon reef, but as soon as we were clear of the shelter, I began to understand why Opataia had gone to bed instead of starting off on that eleven mile sail across the lagoon. I did *not* understand why he had not tried to explain to me that it would be wiser to postpone the trip, but I said nothing, words would be useless under the circumstances, for the wind was distinctly in favour of our getting to Fuafatu ; and the islet we had left, although not more than a mile behind us, was lost in the blackness of the night. We could see a few stars through broken clouds, we could see the white horses on the waves, we could hear the sudden rushes of the gusts of wind and the swish of the water as our tiny boat tore through it.

I made a comfortable seat for myself in the stern, and settled in my mind how I was to avoid getting mixed up in the coils of dredging-rope when we capsized. Then I looked round the boat, and saw that the natives were in a little group near the mast with their eyes directed to the lug sail ; a student of our party sat in the centre of the boat also looking at the lug sail. Opataia, I gratefully observed, was at the helm with the "heroic look" in his face, and his

eyes alternately glancing round at the sky and sea, and then at the lug sail. I looked at the lug sail a good deal too, because I knew the natives didn't understand that particular sort of sail, and the student had rigged up a paddle to make an apology for a boom for it, and with such a strong and withal uncertain wind, we were never sure where that paddle would find itself next.

The natives looked perfectly placid, but grave, and there was no chattering or singing, even the pipe did not circulate freely. We were all still and waiting. A queer feeling of elation took me, and in order to depress myself properly I thought of the possibilities. They were pretty bad ones—the chance of a capsize every time the wind puffed from a new direction, the chance of being blown out of the northern entrance and drifting and starving on the unsympathetic ocean, and the chance of smashing up on the reef in attempting to make the narrow entrance to the boat harbour. But it was of no use, it was impossible not to feel uplifted. We none of us attempted to look at a watch; it was too dark to begin with, and besides time did not seem to be of such great importance just then.

It seemed as if one had gone on like that—in the roar of the wind, the swish of the sea, and the darkness—for ages, and that one would continue to go on and on like that for ever. Suddenly Opataia looked stern, slightly moved the helm, shouted a short, sharp order to the men; there was a change in the motion of the boat, a roll, a lurch, and there we were, inside the still water of the tiny boat harbour of Fuaafatu!

It seemed little short of a miracle to us that we had really run that eleven miles in such a wind and sea, and had hit that tiny passage not more than twenty yards wide on a dark night, with only the occasional glimmer of a star among the broken clouds to guide us. But we had, and before we had finished praising Opataia's skill, the moon shone out for the first time, only for an instant, and showed us the seething white mass of surf we had just come through and the black, angry waves beyond. Opataia pointed to a huge black cloud speeding towards us from the east, and said "lei" (good), meaning that we had landed not a moment too soon.

We found the rest of our party quietly asleep under shelters made of a few sticks, stuck into the ground about four feet apart, tied together at the top, and covered with loose palm leaves as thatch. Opataia pointed out Tavita's hut, and as I had brought a rug in a biscuit-tin and it was dry, I crawled under the shelter, wrapped the rug round my wet skirts and feet, and stretched myself on the floor, with elbows in the sand and chin on palms, and looked out of the hut while relating the adventures of the past three days to my spouse, who dutifully tried to rouse himself from his beauty-sleep to listen. He woke up soon though, for, before I was half through with my recital, the short lull was broken by a squall of wind of almost hurricane force, that broke the supports of our hut, and bent the palm-tree crowns almost to the ground. The moon, which had been struggling fitfully to assert herself,

was hidden, and we were left to imagine the damage that was being done by the storm. When the rain came—real, nice, tropical rain—swept almost horizontally by the wind, we were quickly soaked to the skin, and yet we felt quite jolly, and shrieked out to each other our satisfaction at finding ourselves in such a Mark Tapley frame of mind. It was difficult to talk in such a din, and we contented ourselves most of the time with listening, and wondering how the rest of the party were faring. When the blow had spent itself and we settled ourselves for a nap, there came up a thunderstorm of unusual violence; so we waited patiently until that was over, and then slept, but not soundly, worn out though we were.

If you have never slept on a palm-leaf bed, take my advice and don't, unless you can stretch out full length, and can sleep without moving. At every camping-place our native friends gathered numbers of palm leaves, split them up through the midrib, and disposed them on the floor of our hut cunningly—midribs out to form the edge of the bed, and pinnule-points in to make a soft, springy mattress. That sounds good, you say. Yes, but if you don't lie perfectly still one or more of those midribs will become displaced, and will get under you, and then—well, when you feel very sore on one side, you roll over in desperation and misery, and you displace a few more midribs, and so on, all night, until you have the sensation of sleeping on a gigantic gridiron. In the morning you get up early, under a sense of ill-usage and general discouragement.

We were up very early on the morning following the storm, for we were very damp, the midribs had got awfully mixed, and numbers of the biggest and most impudent of the hermit crabs had come into our shelter to keep us company.

When the whole party assembled we found that our two students had been spending most of the night holding on to the guy ropes of their tent; one confessed to having got a little wet, but the other said he had not got wet all through the storm. We didn't challenge the statement. The natives had not been so well protected as we had been, for their shelters blew clean away at the first puff; but like true philosophers, they rolled themselves up in their fala mats, and waited for more news. They hadn't a dry rag among them, and it was a chilly morning for the tropics; but they seemed quite cheerful, and all assembled on the beach at 6 a.m. for prayers.

By the way, the natives never miss prayers. We took them away to various islets for several dredging and surveying trips, and the boatmen assembled in clean lava-lavas, regularly at 6 a.m. and at sundown, on the beach for prayer-meetings. No matter where we were, or what the weather was like, prayers were never neglected. We were very much astonished the first time we saw them preparing for the service, getting into clean shirts and lava-lavas, and grouping themselves round a fire. We wondered what the fire was for, as it was a hot night; and we wondered why the men had put on shirts, because they seldom wear any clothing but the loin cloth when working. The

fire was to give light enough for Opataia to read by; and the shirts were a part of the religious ceremony, "palenti cloes" being one of the observances that the pastors insist on. My husband and I were strolling on the sandy beach while these preparations were going forward; but the sudden outburst of the weird singing stopped our wanderings, and we stood still to watch these brown children of the London Missionary Society. It was a perfect night, still and balmy, with a faint light from a young moon; and the natives made an exquisite picture as they sat in their bright clothes round a wood fire, under a stately clump of palms. They sang a hymn heartily and reverently, and then Opataia's deep voice was heard reading from a Samoan Bible, after which all the men closed their eyes and sat still while Opataia offered up a short prayer. After the few still seconds which usually succeed a prayer, the men dispersed, took off their clean clothes, and got into working garb and went to bed, or wandered off in quest of sea-fowl. After the first night we always joined the group for evening prayers, and we were struck with the frequency of the word "faafatai" (thanks) in all Opataia's prayers; they were chiefly thanksgiving, and not begging, as are many extempore prayers.

I passed several happy days under the palm-trees on the various islets of the atoll, with Opataia, Tanei, and the trader; while my husband and his students were pacing, and taking levels, and otherwise accumulating knowledge.



First of all Opataia always took me round the islet—it was never a long walk—and pointed out to me all the trees and plants that were peculiar to the islet, and he always wrote down or dictated their native names for me. He would also draw my attention to all extra big deposits of drift-pumice, and to the soil enriched by guano, and to any patches of cultivation, evidently mistaking me for an intelligent person yearning after interesting and varied information. When I was tired he would politely climb a palm and fetch me down a drinking cocoa-nut, and after a refreshing drink we wandered back to the shade nearest the landing place. Here I would rest, while Opataia, spear in hand, went off to the reef in search of fish for our midday kaikai. In the meantime Tanei would make a native oven, and when the fish arrived it would be plaited in palm pinnules, laid on the hot stones (with some unskinned green bananas if we were fortunate enough to have any), and all would be covered in with the leaves of the crow's-nest fern, and a hillock of sand piled on top. When the meal was thus satisfactorily arranged for, they would sit down with me, and talk, and prepare fibre from the fo tagata for fishing-lines, or lasso rats for my amusement.

The fo tagata was not so plentiful on the main islet as on the northernmost islets, and so the natives used to seize the opportunity offered by surveying trips, to gather a good supply of the tough pliable bark. The fo tagata is a shrub sending up from the rootstock a number of slender shoots from three to six feet in

length. The natives selected those that were not too young or too old, but just right for their purpose, cut off as many as they could carry, and brought them back to the landing place. After stripping off the leaves they would, with their teeth, peel off the whole bark from base to tip. This bark was then flattened out like a strip of dark green ribbon, about two and a half inches wide at the base, and narrowing almost to a point at the tip, and was rolled into balls with the smooth damp inner side in ; and these balls were then carefully rolled in several layers of thick green leaves, to keep them moist until they got back to the main islet. Next day they would unroll these ribbons, and scrape until all the soft greenish material was removed, and only the long tough fibres remained, and these when seasoned would be plaited into exceedingly strong and durable fishing-lines. The natives prefer buying European fishing-lines when they can afford it.

Lassoing rats is rather an exciting game. In all the uninhabited islets these rats are as numerous as the crabs, and you can't sit down quietly anywhere for two minutes without seeing their sharp little noses and bright eyes peeping out from under the vegetable refuse on the ground. Opataia was a capital hand at lassoing them ; and even his stately gravity would relax somewhat when he nicked a rat neatly. The method was this : a drinking cocoa-nut was scooped out, and just a small portion of the delicate soft white kernel left in the bottom of the shell. The shell was then propped upright carefully, circular aperture

uppermost, and a running noose made in the end of a fishing-line was laid carefully round this aperture. When these preparations were complete, Opataia returned to the other end of the noosed line, and waited. Soon several little noses would poke out of the rubbish, and sniff rapidly; then the bravest spirit would run up the nut, and hang half-way down inside it, while the little paws scraped up the delicate kernel, and then the cruel line would be jerked, and the loop closed on the poor little panting body. Opataia caught five rats in five minutes, and then I got sorry for the poor, pretty, cheeky little things, and drew him away from this pursuit.

Dredging on the outer edge of the ocean reef was part of the work of a surveying party; it was an amusement in which I did not join, although I often watched it with bated breath from the shore, and always counted heads whenever they were at rest long enough, to make sure that the tale was complete. The quantity of rope that was lost over that 800 feet of submarine cliff was something to wonder over. There were all sorts of contrivances for dredging: iron claws to snatch and break the branching corals growing out from the reef, hemp-tangles and nets to catch the broken scraps, and iron tubes lined with tallow and resin to dump down on to the soft stuff. It was very easy to lower these things into the water, but it took my husband, two students, and about half a dozen natives to haul one up, and they had to pull sometimes for hours, and finally hauled up enough stuff to fill a small pill-box; sometimes there was

enough to fill a 2lb. meat tin, and then there were great rejoicings. Have you ever tried getting sprays of delicate coral out of hemp-tangles? I have. My husband thought it would be nice for me to help the great work of the expedition by freeing the coral chips from the tangles. I did a little, but found that the employment was too mechanical, and so I resigned. No one else seemed keen about taking up the work I had so basely abandoned, and I observed that pieces of the tangles were still mixed up with those corals when they arrived in Sydney. My husband thought it would be a nice new game for our children, and spread the dining-room floor with newspapers and showed the dear children how easy it was to pick out hemp-tangles, and how nice. They looked dubiously at the coral and worked for about half an hour, and then unostentatiously dispersed; they avoided mentioning coral for a few days. Whether the "office boy" finally had to complete the work, or whether the Royal Society of London got the corals with hemp-tangles thrown in, I have deemed it best not to inquire.

Sometimes the iron claws of a dredge or the tallowed iron tube would lose its heart to a big chunk of the reef, and would cling to it firmly, in spite of all the hauling of all the willing hands aloft. Then something had to go, and it was usually the rope; if it was a good rope it would break close up to the boat, so that all the rope as well as the amorous dredge would be left to woo the reef; if it was an old rope, scarcely worth the hauling up, it would break

close to the dredge, so that none of it was lost. When a rope snapped, those who were pulling it fell backwards promiscuously into the bottom of the boat. This kind of pastime could only be pursued on comparatively fine days (when of course it was fearfully hot), on account of the smallness of the boats and the danger of the reef; and about five hauls a day, in addition to the rowing there and back again, were generally enough to satisfy all hands. The natives required a good deal of rest after a day's dredging, and when it was calm and they could not sail back to the main islet, but had to row the eleven miles or so, it required all the trader's cheerful management to save them from despondency.

## CHAPTER XX.

### SIP A SIP A!

ONE Sunday morning, just before our usual time for rising, an excited native tore into our hut yelling, "Sip a sip a!" (A ship, a ship). We rose and dressed at express speed, and tore down to the lagoon beach, for we had only been one month on the island, and no ship was expected. There, comfortably anchored close to the lagoon reef, was the little white steamer *Clyde*, and on the shore, just landed from a boat, was no less a person than our Fiji friend, Dr. Corney, in spotless white ducks, looking so beautifully civilized that we felt almost too shabby and dirty to claim acquaintance. We did though, with no apparent hesitation, and carried him off to our hut, deluged him with questions, introduced him to our most troublesome patients, and got advice which strengthened our hands considerably for the remainder of our stay. He had brought us a box of good things to eat, a present from his thoughtful wife, a box of apples, tomatoes, pumpkins, onions, pawpaws, and passion fruit, all of which were delicious to us after a month's abstinence from such dainties.

The Funafuti girls, as usual on such occasions, put

in a very good time flirting with the sailors, white men, Fiji boys, and Rotuma boys, who came in the *Clyde*. The Rotuma boys were very handsome, and the Funafuti girls scrupled not to tell them so publicly, and in such a way as to lacerate the feelings of the Funafuti boys. The *Clyde* had brought with her a shipwrecked crew of thirteen Norwegian sailors whom they had picked up on Sophia Island, the southernmost of the Ellice Group. These blue-eyed, fair-haired sailors came on shore, and were a great centre of attraction to us as well as to our brown friends. Theirs was a pitiful story. Their ship had been wrecked more than a year before on Malden Island, and they had drifted about in an open boat with very little food for weeks, for a distance of about 1660 miles. Just as they were exhausted from want of food and exposure, they saw Sophia Island, and with a last supreme effort got their boat nearly ashore. There were three black women and one man on the island, which is only a guano station, and these ran into the surf and helped them ashore; one man died as soon as he landed, the rest pulled round and were in capital health and good condition, but almost without clothes, when the *Clyde* saw their signals and took them off. They had been on the island ten months when they saw a ship; they signalled, the ship passed on! Just think of it! It was our ship, the *Maori*, that had passed, but she was a long distance off, and not one of us saw the signals. After this bitter disappointment a month had elapsed, and then the little *Clyde*

passed, providentially close in to the island, and they were rescued. The few natives on the island had been very good to them, but they had no spare clothes to give; the women did what they could though, they made them pandanus-leaf hats and fed them on cocoa-nut, fish, turtle, and wild-fowl.

The *Clyde* could only stay two days at Funafuti, but they were two red-letter days to us, and we felt lonely and flat after she left. We had no more visitors until a week before we left the island.

On this occasion we were at Funafala on a dredging expedition, and the boat with the dredging party on board were about half a mile from the shore, when I noticed that the natives began to jump about and behave strangely. The boat turned about and made for the shore again, and as soon as it was close enough Samu bellowed out, "Man-o-wah, man-o-wah, e palenti fai lup" (Man-of-war, man-of-war, he plenty fire up), and pointed to a column of smoke rising from the ocean side of the belt of palms on the opposite islet. We scrambled our camping materials together in a great hurry, bundled everything into the boats, and set sail for the main islet. We could see the smoke of a steamer working round the western side of the atoll, evidently making for the north passage, and the natives got very happy and excited, speculating as to which would reach the main islet first, ourselves or the man-of-war. We did, but only by the skin of our teeth, just in time to get clean clothes on before the cruiser dropped anchor in the lagoon. The natives were rather



astonished at seeing us shake off our working garb, but we advised them to put on their best clothes too, because, as we put it, "Man-o-war, plenty big boss," but they laughed and said, "No, missionali big boss." When the warship came in she proved to be H.M.S. *Royalist*, commanded by Captain Rason. Soon the whole island was making holiday again, flirtation was the order of the day, and the Jack-tars who got ashore had an extremely good time. The captain and officers, who were soon busy taking photographs, were followed by admiring groups of natives, all anxious to appear in the sun-pictures, all inquisitive and quizzical, passing the funniest remarks and making apt criticisms. The piccaninnies pretended to be terrified of Captain Rason, followed him gingerly, and made tracks for the bush as soon as he turned round, but they became quite friendly when he wanted to photograph them, all except Semanua, my piccaninny with the reddish-brown hair, and she was with difficulty induced to stand still, probably because her picture was the one specially wanted.

H.M.S. *Royalist* stayed only a day, but gave us such provisions as we needed, and helped us in a number of ways. When she was gone we began speculating as to whether the long-expected trading ship would turn up, and how long it would be before the mission ship came in. Two days after the *Royalist* left us there was another cry, on Sunday morning again, too, of "Sip a sip a!"; this time followed by the excited cry of "Teone Viliamo,

Teone Viliamo!" (*John Williams, John Williams*). We looked at each other; this was the mission ship, in which it had been arranged that some or all of us were to return to Sydney. She was not expected for at least another week, and we had scarcely done any packing.

What a variety of feelings the sight of that ship induced—joy at the idea of getting back home to the bairns, regret at leaving my Funafuti friends, distaste at the prospect of having to travel in a missionary ship. How I had been pitied by my Sydney friends who knew that I had to return in a mission ship, and I pitied myself too, for I did not feel it would be pleasant for me, an unorthodox and not too pious Anglican, to be boxed up in a small ship with a number of stiff, unsympathetic Puritans. I certainly felt a little sorry for the Puritans too.

Notwithstanding my doleful anticipations I was in a great hurry to get a glimpse of my fellow-passengers for the return voyage; so my husband told Tanei to get us a canoe, and we were paddled off to the ship, and were received by Captain Hore (of Tanganyika renown) and the visiting missionary and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Goward, of Samoa. The first look into their faces and the first handshake were reassuring, and I soon found that the Puritan bigots I had dreaded did not exist. These were just good, earnest people, full of their work, of course, and anxious to do what was right, but they were also people who had not only read and thought, but had travelled widely, and were broad-minded,

full of interesting information, and pleasant to live with. They managed to put up with our shortcomings, too, in an extremely liberal and amiable manner.

We were soon friends, went round the village together, and chatted amicably, even about mission work, which before coming to the island I had held in small esteem. I had never seen any mission work when I disposed of the subject in this summary fashion, but what I had seen of the results of the London Missionary Society's work in this island commanded my respect.

The *John Williams* could only stay two days, and during those two days everyone worked at high pressure. The visiting missionary and his wife examined the school, consulted with church deacons and the native pastor, distributed stationery and medicines, and conducted services and prayer meetings. We rushed round packing with all our might, for four of us were to go in the *John Williams*, and the other seven were to remain behind "to bottom the bore," if possible. This necessitated rapid thought and arrangement for the securing of money and provisions for those who were to be left behind.

At last the farewell moment came. I had been round to my special friends, the trader's family, and my native mother; my daughter and piccaninnies had followed me round ever since the ship had come in, making me feel throaty with their sad, long-drawn-out "aues" (alas!). I had seen too much of a South Sea Island farewell to wish to have to endure one,

and I was puzzled for a way out of it, for the people had said, in a manner to imply that it was to be an exciting entertainment to them and a great compliment to me, that they would "palenti too moshy cly" (plenty too much cry) when I went away.

I had seen them say good-bye to Misalaima, a Nukulaelae girl, who was returning to her island in the mission ship. They had given her a pet pig, and she clasped it to her bosom, while the girl friends she had made in Funafuti crowded around her, hugging and rubbing noses and howling. In this scrimmage the pet pig got squeezed, and he joined his squeals to those of the native girls, much to the amusement of our students, who said derisively, "Look there, puaka palenti cly too!" This made them shriek with laughter in the middle of a beautiful wail.

But the full meaning of "palenti too moshy cly" did not dawn on me until I saw them say good-bye to one of their own girls, Vitolia, who was going in the *John Williams* to Apia, to the High School there. All the village assembled on the beach. Vitolia came out, with swollen eyes and damp countenance, in a frock just presented to her by another girl. When she was close up to the boat her mother clung round her neck, rubbed noses, and set up the most dismal howl that ever anyone's nerves were thrilled with. Then the mother stood aside, emitting fearful howls at intervals, and raining down a perfect tropical shower of tears; and one after another the girls went up to Vitolia, hung on her neck and wailed, until I feared the girl would be reduced to pulp with the

squeezing and the tears. By this time the wailing had become general, and was so dismal and bitter that I felt it was approaching the unendurable. Just then Vitolia was hustled into the boat and taken away. The people dried their eyes and left off howling to watch the boat, and in about half an hour were capering about all smiles and high spirits.

This was a startling change, and rather surprised me. They had been in earnest over their miserable wailing, and yet they were genuinely happy again so soon. I came to the conclusion that in their grief, as in many other ways, they were like children—they were quickly moved, violent in their expressions of sorrow, and as easily diverted.

It occurred to me that I might catch itch, ringworm, and yaws combined if I let them hang round me in the island fashion when they said good-bye. This thought gave me the creeps, and I consulted Mr. Goward, who laughingly suggested that I should be rushed through the crowd and hustled off into the boat, before the people could guess what was happening. The girls and boys, however, had arranged to give me a little sing-sing as a farewell compliment, and when the usual speech-making time arrived I had a happy thought. I asked Mr. Goward to make a little speech in Samoan for me, to tell the people how happy I had been on their island, how much I loved them, and how I regretted leaving them; that I wanted to remember them with bright eyes and smiling faces as I had always seen them while living among them; that I did not like tears and lamentations,

so that no one who cared for me was to cry, but that if they wanted to make a big noise they were to sing out "Hip, hip, hurrah!" like the palagi boys did. This pleased them immensely, and I went round shaking hands with all, kissed my native mother and daughter, and got into the boat; and the last I saw of my Funafuti friends was a swaying, capering mass of arms and legs, and ear-piercing yells of "Ip-ip-ulla!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ANOTHER ISLAND

SLOWLY Funafuti faded from our sight as we stood on the deck of the *John Williams* looking backward regretfully, watching the ever-increasing indistinctness of its outline, until at last it lay buried in the quivering yellow light of the setting sun.

From that golden blot I turned with a sigh. I leaned over the rail that separated me from the lower deck, on which were scattered interesting groups of coloured passengers—a sick child on the way to the medicine-man in Samoa, our pretty Vitolia setting out into the big world with swollen eyes and pathetic mouth, several contented-looking Samoan pastors returning home for a holiday after several years' exile, and last, but not least interesting, the castaways.

There were eight of these castaways, sole survivors of a party of twenty-two Samoans, who had been drifting about the Pacific in a canoe from June 17th to August 16th, 1897. They had set out from Tutuila, an island in the Samoan Group, on June 17th, with only two days' provisions on board, to cross to another island in the group, but were blown away

in a NW. by W. direction to Nanomea, the northernmost island in the Ellice Group, a total distance of nine hundred and thirty miles.

During this ghastly voyage of eight weeks these unfortunates lived first of all on the few cocoa-nuts which they had brought for the two days' sail they had anticipated, then at long intervals they were fortunate enough to hook two sharks; they carefully collected the rain that fell in frequent showers, and finally were driven to gnawing wood and *siapa* (native cloth) to allay the pangs of hunger.

Eight of them died during this eight weeks of misery; the remaining fourteen were cast up on the reef at Nanomea, too weak to get out of the boat, and though they were carried ashore and hospitably entertained by the Nanomeans, six more of them succumbed to starvation. The eight survivors were taken on board the *John Williams* when she called at Nanomea on her annual visitation, and she was now taking them back to their homes. There were three men, one elderly woman, and a girl of about twelve, who had revived wonderfully, and even put on flesh, although they had not reached the stage when they could smile or rejoice over their escape. They sat on the deck for the most part, thoughtfully dejected. The other three were pitiable objects, thin as skeletons, and too weak to walk: one, a boy of four, was feeding up in a hopeful way, but the other two, young women, were in the last stage of consumption from exposure and starvation, and it was doubtful whether they would live until they reached Apia.



A story of horrors this, too common on the bosom of the gentle Pacific. I thought of the terrible experience of the Norwegian sailors rescued by the *Clyde*, of the numbers of ships and canoes that had been missing and never heard of again, and with a shudder recalled our narrow escape in crossing the outward-setting current of the lagoon on that memorable night when Opataia steered us into safety with such marvellous skill.

I shook off these creeping horrors and turned to the more cheerful companionship on the upper deck, but had barely regained my cheerfulness when I found I had urgent business at the ship's side, after which I retired to an airy and spotlessly clean cabin and there lost all regrets, and hopes too, for that matter, in the grip of a more absorbing misery.

The night wore on, and the day dawned, the ship stopped, and I hastily dressed and went on deck. Land again! Something like Funafuti too, but with less dense and brilliant foliage. This was Nukulaelae, the last of the islands at which the *John Williams* has to call on its annual visitation.

Like Funafuti, Nukulaelae is a coral atoll, but there is no entrance for ships into its lagoon, and the *John Williams* had to lie off at a respectful distance from the ocean reef and send the visiting missionary and his wife ashore in one of the fine surf boats belonging to the ship. My husband and the alumni were, of course, keen for the shore, and persuaded me to accompany them. That landing was an experience. It was low tide, and we could only be rowed close

in to where the surf broke on the ocean edge of the reef; there we had to step out of the large, safe-looking surf boat manned by a dozen strong Aitutaki boys into a cockle-shell of a canoe manned by a solitary Nukulaelae native. This canoe was rapidly paddled towards what looked like a little cove with a waterfall at the end, and just as I was wondering why we were making suicidal tracks for such a place, the native in charge of the canoe yelled and performed extraordinary antics with his paddle, and suddenly the canoe was lifted up on the back of a big wave, and with a rush and a roar we were carried over the breakers and a long way up on to the reef platform. Here another native, standing waist deep in water waiting for us, seized the canoe, and we were paddled across the reef until the water of the lagoon became too shallow, and then we were invited to get out and wade. We did, but I floundered about so helplessly on the uneven and slippery coral floor, knee deep in water, that a polite native offered me his back, and I mounted and rode triumphantly "pick-a-back" across the rest of the reef, and landed among a small but observant group of natives.

By the time I reached the shore the missionaries were well into their work of interviewing pastor and deacons, examining the school, and conducting services. My husband and the students were yearning for a geological and photographing tramp, and so I said good-bye to them and began a leisurely stroll on my own account. This atoll is much smaller than Funafuti, the islets are closer together, and really

form a "garland of green" round a small lagoon, the calm surface of which is protected from the deep-sea currents by an unbroken wall of coral reef.

The main islet on which I stood was very small ; the foliage was not so rich as Funafuti, the trees were scaggier and farther apart ; there seemed less soil and less moisture, and the glare from the greyish-white coral was distressing to the eyes. The natives were not so lively or so well dressed, though in every other respect remarkably like our Funafuti friends. Every man I met asked me for tobacco, and I found that the island was miserably poor and had run completely out of tobacco, because their trader had been absent for several months, and there had been no one therefore to buy their copra or to sell them tobacco. Their trader was not an admirable person, even Louis Becke couldn't make an adorable scamp out of him ; he certainly had been entangled in a lively squabble in which he had threatened to shoot the king, and for which he had been deported to Funafuti, there to await the High Commissioner's pleasure. While we were in Funafuti this man had received permission from His Excellency the High Commissioner to return to Nukulaelae, and he therefore posed as a reformed character before the good missionaries, and got a free passage for himself, his native wife, and two children in the *John Williams*.

The Nukulaelae natives welcomed him back affectionately. I saw the natives with their arms tenderly entwined about his waist, for this man meant tobacco, and what is life in Nukulaelae without tobacco ? But

Chief Justice of Nukulaelae  
in Native Costume



The Trader.

The Jamaica Man.

NUKULAEAE NATIVES.

DAY OF  
CAREERS

[illegible]

there was one person who was not pleased to see the trader back; this was a Jamaica native, much darker in colour than the Ellice islanders, who spoke of them contemptuously as "niggers," and called himself an Englishman because he was born a British subject. This worthy had been put on shore about ten years previously from a ship on which he had misbehaved himself considerably; but he was not in the least depressed by his position, and had made himself of consequence in the island by bullying the natives, and he hated the trader bitterly as a rival bully.

Such men as these are corrupting influences in the Pacific Islands.

The Jamaica worthy saw me coming, jauntily advanced to meet me, and said, "Me de Gob'ment Interpreter, king e say e want speka you, misi, you come along." I followed him to the royal hut and was introduced to the king, a dirty old man in a filthy shirt and lava-lava, with his face bound up in unclean rags. He was sitting cross-legged with dejected mien on a rough settee, and with the "Government Interpreter's" help I found that he was suffering from some serious disease of the jaw, either tonu or cancer, and wanted medicine from me. He ruled over sixty souls all told!

There were several other disconsolate-looking men sitting about on the floor of the hut, and they were introduced to me by the "Government Interpreter" as the "Chief Justice" of Nukulaelae, the "Secretary of State," the "Legal Adviser to the Crown," etc.,

etc. I felt I was in distinguished company, and therefore answered very meekly to the questions so briskly put to me by the "Government Interpreter." They wanted to know who I was, was I a missionary, if not was I good, where did I come from, where was I going, what was I doing at Nukulaelae, and finally had I any tobacco? This was all very well, but when the Jamaica man said the king wanted to know why we had brought that trader white-fella back again, I got weary, referred them to the white missionary, and with properly respectful adieux to such noble personages, made my escape out into the glare of the sun again.

Here I was joined by a couple of friendly piccinnies, who had finished with their school examination, and together we prowled around. The village was not pretty; the huts were all built at regular distances from each other round three sides of a square, and the square was absolutely devoid of verdure, except for one or two dusty-looking cocoa-nut palms.

The houses were thatched with pandanus leaf as in Funafuti, but the walls were on a different plan. They were fixtures, made of upright palm petioles with inch spaces between for the admission of light and air. This style of wall is tidier but far less picturesque than the palm-leaf mats in Funafuti. I took a stroll round the taro gardens, and had a good look at the cocoa-nut groves, and came to the conclusion that the food supply was not so great in proportion to the number of inhabitants as it was

in Funafuti. After seeing the taro gardens and the native well, I returned to the village and watched a woman cooking food in a native oven. The method was precisely that in vogue in Funafuti.

I glanced in at the school and church, where services and examinations were going on, and then walked on to the pastor's house, round the door of which were heaped several cases of provisions, tins of biscuits, bags of flour and rice. This was the yearly contribution from the London Missionary Society to the support of the native pastor; Nukulaelae cannot be so liberal in its provision for the pastor as is the more favoured Funafuti, because its soil is less fertile, therefore the mission supplies the deficiency.

One hears amusing stories about the pastor's food. After the mission ship goes his flock collects about him in an extra friendly way, and keep dropping in to afternoon tea, so to speak, until all the "white fella kaikai done gone"; then the pastor has to make shift for the rest of the year on presentations, not too liberal, of cocoa-nut and fish.

The pastor's wife in Nukulaelae set a splendid example of cleanliness and tidiness. Her skin was perfectly clean, she wore a tidy gown of navy-blue print spotted with white, with a lace collar round the throat, and her hair was bright and glossy, plaited in a pig-tail, and tied up with a piece of print. She was a pretty little woman, or girl rather, for she did not look more than seventeen years of age.



Her house of coral cement was dazzling with fresh whitewash, there were several rooms neatly partitioned off from one another, there were coloured pictures from illustrated papers on the walls, snowy-white coral pebbles ("Futunu feathers," these are facetiously termed by beach-combers when they have to sleep on them) on all the floors, and in the reception-room a table covered with a finely-wrought Samoan mat on which was a large copy of the Samoan Bible. The dining-room was furnished with a rough table and settee, but all was spotlessly clean. No one was at home, and so I wandered round till I found a bedroom, with a queer four-post bed in it; this bed had neither pillow, mattress, nor rug, but merely planks stretched across where the spring-mattress should have been; but I took possession of it, and slept soundly during the hot part of the afternoon.

It was half-tide when we were ready to embark, and so the ship's boat came close up to the shore for us, and we were spared the pleasure of wading (our clothes had dried on us by this time), also the excitement of shooting the surf in a canoe, and of transhipping from the canoe to the boat.

When we had settled down for the evening and the mission ship was heading for Samoa, we were mightily entertained by the missionary's account of the manner in which he was hauled over the coals by His Majesty the King of Nukulaelae.

It seems that when the king and the high dignitaries failed to extract any information from me on the subject of the trader's return, they sent a message to

the missionary, telling him they wanted to see him on important business. Mr. Goward therefore went across to the king's hut, and was there introduced to all the state officials by the "Government Interpreter," just as I had been. When the introductions and preliminary palaver were over, the "Government Interpreter," who had been visibly swelling as his opportunity approached, burst out volubly in this wise: "De king e say e vely angly; one, two, dree ting make e angly. E say 'Teone Viliamo' (*John Williams*) come to Nukulaelae port, an e see gob'ment flag Nukulaelae, an e no pull im flag up an down. King e say why you no make you flag pull im up an down, make all a same a salute when you see gob'ment flag Nukulaelae? Den two ting, king say e send gob'ment boat to 'Teone Viliamo,' and Chief-Justice Nukulaelae go board, an Legal Adviser go board, an Sekkatarri State go board. King tell dese fella say capitaine 'Teone Viliamo,' 'What ship dis is? Ware e come from? Ware e go? What for you come Nukulaelae?' And one man, mate you call im, shove Sekkatarri State an say, 'Look ere, you clare out,' an e make Sekkatarri State an all gob'ment men go back in gob'ment boat. King e vely angly, an say why you do dis? Tree ting, King e say you bring back white fella trader? Dat white man no good. King e say e no want dat fella ere, an e say who tell you bring him here?"

Mr. Goward let the man run himself down, and then, completely ignoring him, turned to the king, and in chieftain's language asked if the king and

chiefs could speak Samoan. They were all delighted to say yes, and then Mr. Goward addressed himself to them alone in Samoan, using chief's language all the time, and said he thought he could explain away these difficulties in a perfectly satisfactory manner. In the first place they had been wrongly informed that the flag they displayed (the Union Jack) was the government flag of Nukulaelae; it was simply the sign to foreigners that this island was under British protection. He further explained that it was not the custom for vessels in entering a port to salute the Union Jack. After the king and chiefs had discussed these statements at great length, they assured Mr. Goward that they were perfectly satisfied now that no insult had been intended to the Government of Nukulaelae, and that the Jamaica man had misled them.

Then Mr. Goward proceeded to the next point, still ignoring the "Government Interpreter," who several times interrupted angrily and rudely, and had to be snubbed into silence. Mr. Goward asked if the Government canoe sent by the king carried a flag or any other mark by which the officers of the *John Williams* could distinguish it from the other canoes that came round the ship, or if the high chiefs who went on board wore any uniform or badge, or presented any document which explained who they were, or what was their business. After an embarrassed silence the king and chiefs said no; they had neither flag, uniform, badge, nor letter by which they could be distinguished. Then Mr. Goward pointed

out that the officers of the *John Williams* were not to blame in this matter, that, although he deplored the need of the rule, it was a rule of the *John Williams* that canoes were not to hang round the ship, because the screw of the steamer was a very serious danger to the canoes. Then, when the king was impressed with this explanation, he said that the *John Williams* had brought the trader back because a letter had been received from his Excellency the High Commissioner, giving the man leave to return to his business in Nukulaelae.

Then followed a palaver, which the Jamaica fire-brand vainly tried to mar, after which the missionary took leave of the State and Majesty of Nukulaelae with every possible expression of friendliness on both sides.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### WHAT THE EXPEDITION ACCOMPLISHED

AND what about Darwin's coral-atoll theory? Just so. And why was it necessary to prove its truth or otherwise? I don't think it was necessary myself; but there is a restless class of people, to whom the world is infinitely indebted, people *who want to know*, and they worry themselves aged over questions of this sort. The great Darwin has a host of admirers, but rival theories have been mooted, theories that sound as well as Darwin's; and the whole question could be settled, said these want-to-knows, just by putting a diamond-drill bore down a coral atoll, and bringing up a core of rock from a depth of 500 to 600 feet. Darwin had cried for a "doubly rich millionaire" to do the work, but doubly rich millionaires are not as common as daisies in spring, and the few specimens of millionaires sprinkled round have other worthy objects to spend their money on. So the millionaire did not respond to Darwin's appeal, but the Royal Society of London did, and a wealthy woman of Sydney (Miss Eadith Walker) helped liberally, and so did the Government of New South Wales, and by these means a few hundred pounds

and a good set of gear were collected, and the expedition was manned by men who could only afford to give their services and go at their own expense.

For weeks before starting I had heard of little else but our foolishness from some of our friends. The usual cry was, "Well, what's the good of it all? If you were going to open up a diamond field, or a gold mine, or even a good guano deposit, I would take shares." Of course there was no money in it, nothing but the desire to know, and it was consequently foolishness unparalleled. But the leader-elect persevered, and wouldn't let his spirits be damped, so he went on persistently, with Mr. Slee, the Government superintendent of diamond drills, hunting up boilers, pumps, engines, lining-pipes, core-barrels, under-reamers, bits, staging, diamonds, monkeys, driving-wheels, steel shoes for lining-pipes, tanks, core-boxes, ropes, and portable forges; and he had to run about after these strange creatures like a child after pet mice, for they had the same marvellous capacity for slipping through fingers and getting lost. All these things had to be hunted up from Government stores and ordinary shops and forges; they had to be packed, they had to be shipped in Sydney, transhipped from a steamer to a sugar-punt, and from a sugar-punt to another steamer in Suva, and finally they had to be landed on rafts and in boats at Funafuti. Anyone who has not had the pleasure of hunting luggage round in the bewildering process called transhipping can have no notion of what this means. Our scientific staff of volunteers were pretty well fagged out

in Sydney, Suva, and Funafuti, in trying to keep the eighty cases of machinery, the loose pipes and timber, from going in directions never intended by the shippers.

At last, however, it was all safely landed in Funafuti, nothing missing but one bundle of shovels ; and the workmen had the machinery ready for work a week after landing, and then we thought everything would go smoothly.

But the rock to be bored was unlike any rock the men or the machinery had ever tackled before. It was very hard, but they had cut hard, dense rocks easily enough before with the diamond drill ; the point was that this rock was very hard and full of holes at the same time. The machine would cut for a few inches very slowly, but steadily, then, all at once, off would go the barrel spinning round in a cavernous hollow, and sand, water, and pebbles would pour in on all sides, and then the barrel would jam. Then the workmen had a lively time, "tonging" and executing other curious manœuvres with hair-thinning names, trying to unjam the barrel.

Then, when everything was clear again, a piece of rock would come into the way of the barrel, and for an hour or two the steady grind would go on, and then suddenly the barrel would spin round on nothing, and fetch up against the hard rock with a wicked jerk, and scrunch would go all the diamonds ; then the barrel had to be lifted and work stopped while the foreman reset the bit with diamonds.

After this things would go serenely for a day or

two, then the under-reamer would get unhitched and stick fast provokingly at the bottom of the bore, and it would take a week to fish it up again ; then would go on the old routine of getting jammed and un-jammed, varied by the smashing of the driving-wheel, owing to the barrel suddenly coming in contact with a jutting piece of coral after whirling round merrily in a hollow ; and occasionally excessive monkeying telescoped the lining-pipes.

Over and over again came the chief foreman with the doleful tale, " We 're at the end of our tether now, professor, we 'll have to jack this job " ; over and over again the leader said grimly they would do nothing of the kind, and he and the other foremen (true Britishers, who didn't know when they were beaten) invented some ingenious way out of the difficulty.

Everything unfortunate that could happen did happen ; monkeyes smashed, new ones were made ; under-reamer lost, recovered ; pump out of gear, put it in again ; barrel jammed, unjammed ; lining-pipes telescoped, cut away, smaller pipes inserted ; diamonds smashed, replaced ; boiler burst, patch bolted on ; teeth of driving-wheel broken off, new ones put in ; and thus slowly and painfully, fighting hard for every inch of way, a depth of 497 feet was reached. Then the driving-wheel got so hopelessly smashed, that the optimistic leader, the second foreman and the fitter, all had to admit that it would take more than a week to repair it.

So far, like sensible men, they had helped themselves out of difficulties and resumed work cheerfully ;



but this was a staggering blow, for there were only about three weeks of working time left to the expedition, the leader had to return to his post in Sydney at the end of three weeks, the desired depth had not been reached, and provisions were running out terribly fast. Everything looked black. While the leader and his good men and true were shaking their heads over this disappointment, Tili, who was looking on, said, "You sepoil that fella, he no good?" and being assured that the breakage would seriously delay the work, and was worrying his friend Tavita (the leader), Tili cheerfully said, "Me got fella alla same a dat fella." This assertion was received with unbelief, and only a sickly show of amusement, for the delay was not fun to the men who had been working so hard, and were so deadly in earnest about finishing the bore. Tili strode off without more parley, and shortly returned with a driving-wheel that exactly fitted the machine, in fact it was a driving-wheel belonging to a sister machine to the one we were using. Tili explained, "Dis fella alla same; las' time white man leave im, me put im in ground, make cocoa-nut palm grow!" This was a fact, the wheel had been rejected by the workmen of the previous expedition, because its teeth were somewhat worn; Tili had picked it up, buried it at the root of a palm, and there it had remained, till unearthed at this opportune moment.

The leader was just dumb with astonishment, and could scarcely believe his eyes, and the lucky find gave the workmen fresh energy; they fitted in the

resurrected wheel, and resumed work, while the fitter went at the broken one cheerfully. These two wheels kept us lively for the rest of our stay, as fast as one was mended the other was broken, and the fitter got the title of dentist because all his time was spent in putting in new teeth, made from pieces cut off wrought-iron bolts, into the wheel.

Thus the work went on, in spite of hindrances, but much too slowly for the time allowed. When the *John Williams* arrived, the bore was down to 557 feet, and the bottom was not yet reached, and it was the darling desire of the party to reach the bottom. The leader had to go; but the much-broken, much-mended machine was still in working order, there were coals to go on with, and provisions had been augmented by the kindness of the commanders of the *Royalist* and the *John Williams*. The leader could not give it up, the bottom should be struck somewhere about 800 feet, and so he determined to leave the six workmen to go on with the work under the direction of the second in command of the expedition.

Everyone was in high spirits about the results, the success so far had been beyond expectations, and the men were now used to the temper of the rock; but, alas, the work was stopped at the end of a month (at a total depth of 698 feet) because the chief foreman had again come to the "end of his tether," the cracking of a large tube in the tubular boiler being considered by him to offer an insuperable obstacle to continuing the work.

Still the bore had passed the depth named by

Darwin, a good core had been secured, and the bore-hole was left so that other "doubly rich millionaires" might continue the work, and bring it to a triumphant close.

Whether Darwin's theory, or Murray's, or Wharton's is the true one, is a secret contained in that mysterious core, now in the hands of the scientific experts in London, the restless men who "want to know."

Let us hope their minds will be set at rest, and that young students for the future will not have their heads addled by a multiplicity of theories on this subject at any rate.

This was not the only work done by the expedition on the island. Over eighty specimens of plants were collected, and these gave almost as much trouble as did the boring, but no one got excited about that, because collecting the flora was not so important as obtaining the core.

First of all the flowers were collected and pressed. They promptly rotted. Other specimens were secured, but neither paper nor specimens would dry; there was so much moisture in the air that we could preserve nothing but smell, mildew, and stain.

Then kerosene tins were secured and a solution of formaline made, the plants were re-collected for the third time, and put into the mixture; then the tins would not solder up because the solution boiled every time the soldering-irons were applied; and after a few hopeless attempts to keep them, this third collection spoiled.

But there was still some formaline left, and the store

was ransacked for tins with nice little lids set over a sunken rim ; these were found full of currants, so the currants were ousted, while formaline and a fourth collection of plants were made ; and the lids were fastened on and the treasures safely bottled, so we thought. But alas ! in a few days moisture was observed in a large patch round these tins, and on opening them it was discovered that all the solution had leaked slowly away through the imperfectly soldered corners of the currant tins. The specimens were all spoiled again, and now there was no formaline left. But Mr. Woolnough generously offered his bottle of formaline, declaring that his biological specimens would keep very well in the spirit tub ; and Mr. Sweet came forward with what turned out to be a brilliant suggestion. He advised making a mixture of resin and fat, and running this along the imperfect seams and corners of the tins. This was done, and the tins left to cool ; when tested they were found to be perfectly watertight. The fifth collection of plants was then made, and safely stowed away in the resined tins with the formaline ; this collection reached Sydney in good condition.

None of these plants were new to science, so say the botanists ; and the pigeon wasn't new to science either, neither were the lizards ; but it is interesting to know that they are not. Now we may hope that Funafuti will not be collected barren by people in search of scientific curios.

The scientific volunteers on the expedition did more than this. They had provided themselves with a light

boring plant, a sort of baby diamond drill, because they had been assured that there was a sandy cay in the middle of the lagoon, which would be easy and most interesting to bore. There wasn't any sandy cay ; and the trader and the natives said "Big lie" when we told them there was one. They had never seen it.

This would have crushed some people. But the leader said, "We have the drill, let us try it on the island, as there is no cay ; we shall get up something." They did ; it took them six weeks to get twenty-seven feet of core ; and then the pump said it wouldn't play, and it didn't.

But this little drill had been worked by the scientific staff with their own hands, and the idea of doing something with it died hard. They came to the conclusion that they would make a raft with the staging, and take part of the machinery out to the centre of the lagoon, and try to bore in the deepest part of the lagoon.

No sooner suggested than begun. The raft was built, and the natives were in a high state of excitement and expectation, for had not the leader of this expedition been introduced to them by a native word meaning "master builder of canoes," the nearest approach to the title "professor" that the native language admitted of? Of course they expected something extra marvellous when "Tavita, the master builder of canoes," set his people to work on this new kind of vaka ; and they were not disappointed.

I went down to the lagoon shore, on Friday, August 6th, 1897, when the raft was floated, to see the party start for the centre of the lagoon. There were three boat-loads of natives and machinery, and the boats had tow lines to tow the raft into position. She was certainly a queer-looking craft, a platform just about a foot above water, with a seventeen-foot derrick instead of a mast, and three tanks and some spare timber for floats, lashed with three-inch rope to the four corners of the platform.

It was a beautiful day, clear and calm; and the scientific party disposed itself in picturesque and easy attitudes on the platform and derrick, and responded to my assurance "that they would capsize for a dead certainty," with a quiet smile of scorn for my feminine ignorance; and the leader confidently assured me that he would be back for tea at 6 p.m. sharp.

I wish I could forget that day. The sun shone steadily for a few hours, and there was an ominous stillness in the air; but before midday the sky was clouded, the wind began to roar, and soon lashed the lagoon into a sea of angry, white-crested waves. I went restlessly between my hut and the lagoon shore, and gazed over towards where the raft and the boats should be, but I could see nothing. The slow hours dragged on, with no sign of the returning boats, and I tried talking to the women to see if they took a more favourable view of the situation than I did. They smiled as usual, pointed to the centre of the lagoon, and said cheerfully, "Mafuli," which means "capsize." This was dreadful.

As the hour of sunset approached I remembered that my husband had named six o'clock for his tea, so I dragged myself back to my hut through the wind and rain, and dolefully prepared tea of bread-fruit, fish, tea, and scones on my primus stove. Then I sat down ; six o'clock came, and was followed by the sudden tropical sunset ; seven o'clock, eight, nine, half-past nine. I could bear it no longer ; I must run across the island, in spite of dense darkness, wind, and rain, just to look at another woman ; but at that moment a man stooped under the eaves of my hut, and stood there, hatless, bootless, dripping, and smiling ! It was my husband. The relief was too much ; and then he looked so droll, dressed only in a very thin and much torn suit of pyjamas, which stuck to him like a skin, his hair in flat rat-tails round his face, and water running in streams from nose, ears, fingers, and feet—I was bound to sit down and laugh before I could get him dry clothes and his food.

When he was dried, clothed, and fed, he began to laugh too, and gave an amusing description of the day's misadventures ; and I composed myself to listen after being assured that no one was drowned or injured. It had been what the natives called a "mili-mili mafuli !" "Mili-mili" refers to the rotating of machinery, and "mafuli" means "capsize," so that one can get close up to what they meant.

It seems that everything went gaily at the start, and the raft was within a mile of the spot where it was intended to anchor, when the wind and waves

arose and beat upon it. The natives were pulling their hardest, but could make no headway, and the raft and boats began to get drifted in the direction of the ocean current.

The strong ropes that held the tanks began to cut through like rotten tow, for the tanks wobbled with every wave, and the ropes were sawn against the sharp edge of the raft. Then one tank broke away, and Opataia with a magnificent spring and dive swam to the tank, caught the rope, and re-fastened the tank to the raft, and in such a sea, too! Then another tank broke away, and O'Brien (the trader) dived and secured the rope of that, and fastened it in the same way. Then, as there was no doubt that the boats and raft were drifting at the mercy of the wind and current, the order was given to let go the anchors at once. An attempt was made to secure the tanks, and all hands set to work to save ropes and tools by removing them from the raft to the boats. This was satisfactorily done, but soon afterwards two tanks broke away suddenly and simultaneously on the port side of the raft; then the raft stuck its starboard side up in the air and swamped the opposite side. Two tanks that were not properly watertight began to fill, and had to be let down to the bottom of the lagoon by ropes, the ends of which were secured and fastened to the anchored raft. After this the raft heaved once or twice, and finally with great dignity heeled completely over, and then bobbed about bottom uppermost, straining viciously at her cables. The



crew swam for the boats. One boat-load reached the island at about 9.30 p.m., the other two at midnight. It had been a very exciting "mili-mili mafuli," and I joined in the merriment made over it by the natives, for no one had been injured, and now there could be no more attempts to bore the lagoon with inadequate appliances.

The raft broke loose from her moorings in the heavy sea, and the last we saw of her she was kicking herself to pieces on the reef, trying to get out into the open ocean.

After this "mafuli" the scientific volunteers set to work at all the islets, and geologically surveyed each one; then they dredged on the ocean reef, and filled a goodly number of meat-tins and chip-boxes with sand, shells, and corals, brought up from various depths down to two hundred fathoms.

I hope these mysterious hauls will help the still more mysterious core to decide *the* point for, or against, Darwin.

After all these adventures and misadventures I was heartily tired of the very word "coral," and so by this time will my readers be, if readers ever get so far as this——

THE END.

# SCIENTIFIC POSTSCRIPT

## NOTE ON THE RESULTS OF THE BORINGS AT FUNAFUTI, ELLICE GROUP

By PROFESSOR T. G. BONNEY, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.

A BRIEF sketch of the conflicting hypotheses in regard to the origin of coral-reefs and atolls is given in the third edition of Charles Darwin's well-known book, *Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs*.<sup>\*</sup> It was his opinion that an atoll might be regarded as a monument erected by corals to the memory of a buried island, on the shore of which it had begun its existence as a "fringing reef," and had continued to grow upwards as the land beneath it gradually subsided. This hypothesis for some years was widely accepted, but for about the last twenty it has been questioned by more than one very competent critic. It was, however, very generally admitted that reef-building polyps, though they might occasionally exist, did not flourish at greater depths than about twenty-five fathoms. Thus it became a matter of the utmost importance to ascertain the actual structure of an atoll, and the initiative of testing this by a boring was taken by Professor Sollas, with the result that the Royal Society of London determined, in co-operation with a committee of scientific men in Sydney (in which Professors

\* Appendix ii. p. 281 (1889). The first edition appeared in 1842.

Edgeworth David and Anderson Stuart took a leading part), to make the attempt. The Admiralty gave most valuable aid by instructing Captain Field, of H.M.S. *Penguin*, then engaged on the Australian station, to convey the party, of which Professor Sollas was in charge, to Funafuti, to co-operate in the work of boring, and to make a survey of the atoll and adjoining part of the ocean. Of this expedition the principal expenses were defrayed by the Royal Society, but the Department of Mines (New South Wales) contributed largely by lending the necessary boring apparatus and the services of skilled workmen.

The party reached Funafuti in May, 1896, and the machinery was set up near the sandy beach of the lagoon a short half-mile to the south-west of the village. With considerable difficulty the bore-hole was carried to a depth of 105 feet, when further progress was prevented by material which flowed like quicksand, baffling the tool and choking the pipes. The tool had passed through  $32\frac{1}{2}$  feet of sand with some blocks of coral; then through  $52\frac{1}{2}$  feet of blocks and thin reefs of coral, the remaining 20 feet consisting of material resembling the first, but becoming still more sandy towards the bottom. The sand, it should be mentioned, was wholly organic material, consisting largely of foraminifera and nullipores. The apparatus was then removed to the seaward side of the island, where the surface of the reef seemed more promising, and a boring was made near to the water's edge. This, however, was even less successful. It was carried down to a depth of 72 feet, through material generally similar to that pierced in the other one, and was arrested by the same cause, the occurrence of a "quicksand." The attempt was then abandoned, as the boring plant was evidently incapable of coping with the very peculiar material which had been so unexpectedly encountered. But though the expedition was unsuccessful in its principal object—viz, to bore to a depth of at least 600 feet—it was not so in

many respects, for Professor Sollas, with its other scientific members, Messrs. Gardiner, Collingwood, and Hedley, made a thorough study of the natural history of the atoll above and below water,\* and Captain Field completed an elaborate survey of the lagoon and surrounding ocean. The form of Funafuti is remarkable. It resembles a gigantic fortress wall † crowning a conical mountain. The nearly circular base of the latter, 30 miles long by 28 miles broad, is at a depth of 2000 fathoms—the general level of the ocean floor in this part of the Pacific. From this the mountain rises with a slope, at first very gentle but gradually steepening, to the submarine contour line of 400 fathoms or thereabouts, from which it ascends, at an average angle of about 30°, to 140 fathoms; thence it rises almost precipitously, the slope being commonly from 75° to 80°, till it arrives within about 15 fathoms from the surface, when it rounds off to pass into the shallow flat of the growing reef.

The experience gained during this expedition showed that England was too far from Funafuti to be a good base for the undertaking. Happily its friends in Sydney determined not to accept defeat and set to work to prepare for another attempt. The incidents of this are described in the present volume. The expedition was aided by a liberal contribution from the Royal Society, was furnished with apparatus specially devised to cope with the difficulties which had been encountered in the operations of the previous year, and was in charge of Professor Edgeworth David. The boring was successfully carried to a depth of 643 feet, of which 557 feet had been accomplished before his duties in the university recalled him

\* See J. S. GARDINER, *Proc. Camb. Phil. Soc.*, vol. ix. p. 417, for a general sketch of the atoll of Funafuti. Also the Reports of the Sydney Museum.

† The chain of reefs and islands forming the atoll has an outline roughly resembling a shoulder of mutton, with the shank (sawn short) pointing to the south, and the main island (Funafuti) representing the projecting corner of the blade-bone at the east. The atoll is about twelve miles from north to south and eight miles in greatest breadth.

to Sydney. The stoppage was the result of an irremediable breakdown in the machinery. The boring passed through the following deposits. Below a hard coral breccia, about a yard in thickness, came coral-reef rock interspersed with broken organic material, the latter predominating in a layer between 15 and 20 feet. After 40 feet more or less sandy material set in, with a variable quantity of coral, occasionally in thin reef-like bands, and this continued to a depth of 202 feet, when a rather sudden change took place, and down to 373 feet sandy material was dominant, which at times almost became a mud. Then more reef-like material set in, coral and sand alternating as in the first 200 feet, till at 526 feet a mass of fairly compact, dense, and hard coral limestone occurred, which had a thickness of 29 feet, and below this the same alternation continued to the end. Thus this third zone (from 373 feet downwards) corresponds with the upper one, but contains larger and more numerous masses of true reef. By this year's work it was proved that true reefs were lying at a depth of full 100 fathoms below the sea-level.

But this result was not enough for our friends in Sydney. They had now reached a low stage in the fortress wall, which, according to Captain Field's soundings, crowns the submerged mountain, but it was most important to discover what lay at the base of that wall. Could the bore-hole have been carried down from 150 to 200 feet further, they might have pierced through the foundations of the atoll, and found them resting upon a totally different kind of rock. So in 1898 another expedition was despatched from Sydney under the direction of Mr. C. H. Halligan. Work had ceased in 1897 in a soft dolomitic limestone, but almost immediately after the new party had begun to deepen the bore the tool struck a harder and more crystalline limestone, largely composed of shells and corals. Through this steady progress was made. By September 7th a depth of 987 feet had

been reached, and while this note was being written a telegram reached the Royal Society to announce that boring had ceased at a depth of 1114 feet, in "coral-reef rock," which apparently had been traversed continuously during all this last stage of the work. Thus buried reef must exist, not only at the bottom of the great atoll wall, but also for at least 150 feet down in the slope which comes beneath it.

This, however, is not the only success obtained by the last expedition. A light boring apparatus had been taken to Funafuti, which it was hoped might be used from the deck of a vessel, so as to discover the structure of the reef at the bottom of the lagoon. By permission of the Admiralty, Captain Sturdee paid a short visit to Funafuti with H.M.S. *Porpoise*, so that the attempt might be made with his aid from that vessel. A station was selected where the lagoon was 101 feet deep,\* the vessel made fast, and the machine set up. The experiment was a success, for a hole was rapidly driven down to 144 feet, or 245 feet from the surface of the water. It passed through 80 feet of sandy material, composed of joints of a calcareous alga and bits of shells, and after that of similar material mixed with fragments of coral, which became larger as the depth increased. But at 245 feet progress was arrested by a mass of very hard coral, which baffled all attempts to pierce it, owing to the difficulties presented by so great a length (121 feet) of unsupported pipe. Captain Sturdee then warped the *Porpoise* to a spot about 90 feet nearer the middle of the lagoon, where another boring was made. This went down for 113 feet (about 214 feet below sea-level), passing for the first 80 feet through sand as before; the remainder being a rather hard coral gravel, the lumps varying from the size of a Brazil nut to that of a man's fist. Boring was then discontinued, because Captain Sturdee was unable to make a longer stay at Funafuti.

\* The soundings over a considerable part of the lagoon vary from 120 to 150 feet, the maximum depth obtained being 180 feet.

The cores obtained in all these borings have been, or are being, consigned to the Royal Society, and those which have arrived, *i.e.* those obtained in 1896 and 1897, are being worked out under the supervision of Professor Judd at the Royal College of Science, South Kensington. Till this task is complete it would be premature to discuss their bearing on theoretical questions, but we may safely assert that such ample and valuable materials for the study of the structure of an atoll have never before been obtained.

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